

An Impartial
R E V I E W
OF THE
CONTROVERSY

Concerning the
COMPARATIVE EXCELLENCE, &c.

O F
Moral *and* Positive DUTIES.

In which the true Nature of Law is explained,
and Bishop Cumberland's Scheme of
Morality is considered,

In ANSWER to the *Supplement* to a *Treatise*
of the *Nature*, &c. of the *CHRISTIAN*
SACRAMENTS.

As also, An APPENDIX in Answer to the
ESSAY on *Moral Obligation*.

By Dr Sykes.

L O N D O N:

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W. E. L. W.

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P R E F A C E.



Serious Vindication of the Use and Authority of Positive Duties at a Time, when so many various Attempts to overthrow all Instituted Religion, make a just Defence of it necessary, and expected, would certainly have been very seasonable and of good Effect, had it been undertaken out of a pure disinterested Regard to the Honour of Christianity, and conducted with that Temper and Judgement, which the Importance of the Subject, and the Watchfulness of the Adversary to take all Occasions of Objection, require.

Had the Author of the Nature, &c. of the Christian Sacraments been content to have taken up the Argument purely with this View, and claimed only such a Place, and Preference for positive Duties as their Usefulness will justify, the Command on which they subsist enjoins, and the weightier Matters of Religion will admit; Thanks and Applause ought to have been the least Part of his Reward; and I dare venture to say, that the very Adversaries that have now been forced to appear against him would, if there had been Occasion, have been his Advocates, and have been the first to Honour and Defend both the Author and his Performance.

Dr Clarke

But when one of the best Defenders, as well as Examples of Christian Duty, whom the great Enemy of it must appear to confute before he can hope for any Success^a, under a Pretence of defending Religion, is singled out to be vilified and exposed: And as the Greek Proverb expresses it, Now the Oak is fallen, Every one presumes to mangle it, and enrich themselves with its Spoils^b. When, as if he was the Great Patron of Infidelity, which by his Life and Writings, he has shamed and confuted, and does still confute, he is misrepresented, as giving Occasions to Doubts concerning the Sacraments, and making the Defence of them necessary^c. When the very Principles from which he has drawn all his Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, by which he shews each to be consistent with it self, and with the other, and by which as a late rational Author, who well understands Dr. Clarke's Meaning, and the Subject, has shewn, they are and may be defended, and reconciled against all Objection^d; and which indeed are the true and only Principles, upon which Religion can be defended, as the Event will shew, who ever undertakes the Cause with the Infidel, When these old, well-tried Principles, on which the Law, and the Gospel have so long subsisted, are professedly opposed; and it is maintained that positive Duties are not designed as a Means to promote moral; and therefore, says the Infidel, are either of no Use at all, are unworthy of God, unprofitable to us, and cannot be commanded by him, ought not to be practised by us^e, which Justin Martyr himself allows to be good Reasoning on this Supposition^f; or else

^a Christianity as old as the Creation, Chap XIV. ^b ὁ πρῶτος
παιδαγωγὸς πᾶσι ἄνθρωποις ἐκείνῳ.

^c Nature, &c. Christian Sacraments, p. 2.

^d Dr. Stebbing's Defence of Dr. Clarke.

^e Christianity as old as Creation, p. 141.

^f Justin Martyr,

p. 195. Thirlb. Edit.

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V

*they are founded on the same Reasons as moral; and therefore, adds the Infidel, Christianity is nothing more than natural Religion revived^z, and either positive Duties are not to be observed at all, or they are to be observed, because as naturally good and excellent as moral; and if so, how, says Justin Martyr, is it reconcilable with God's Immutability, and Goodness to Men, that he has not always commanded them the same right Things, if they are right in themselves, as he does at present^h? Nay further, when we are taught that the Reasons of a Law are not to be considered by us, in order to determine the Nature and Extent of its Obligationⁱ? Though it is therefore we believe the Holy Scriptures to have come from God, because they every where illustrate, strengthen, and promote the Law of Nature, says Bishop Cumberland^k; though by the Reason and Tendency of Law, we chiefly distinguish, not only what Laws are Divine and what not, but what Divine Laws are now obligatory, and what have ceased to be so^l? Though the Reasons of the several Laws that interfere with one another, are often the only Things by which we can direct our Practice in any *Ἀντιποσιν* and Opposition, whether of Divine or Humane Laws; and which God has given us a Faculty to discover for this very Purpose^m; yet it seems the Reasons of the several Laws we are concerned with, are not to be considered by us, it is enough for us to know that the same God commands two Duties, in order to find that they are of equal Obligationⁿ.*

^z Christianity as old as Creation, p. 355. 6, 7. ^h Justin Martyr, p. 183. Thirlb. Edit. ⁱ Supplement, p. 17.
^k Cumberland de leg. Nat. Prolegom. S. xxvii. ^l 15 Acts 20.
 Dr. Stanhope's Commenc. Sermon. p. 12. ^m Cumberland de leg. Nat. p. 408. ⁿ Supplem. p. 37.

When

When such dangerous Principles as these are advanced, that deprive Christianity of its chief Divine Character, the Reasonableness and Usefulness of its Precepts, diminish the Reverence due to it, as well as perplex the Practice of it, in every Opposition of Duty, and render many of the Infidels Arguments quite unanswerable; it was no wonder that some Persons appeared, who had too great a Regard for the Interests of our common Faith, to suffer it thus to be betrayed by the mistaken Zeal of any of its professed Advocates: No wonder that they endeavoured with that Earnestness, which the Cause required, to recover the Advantages that had been thus yielded up to the Adversary; to maintain those Principles, without which neither natural or revealed Religion can be supported; and vindicate that sacred Name from unjust Reproach, the Credit of which is so closely connected both with the Proof and Practice of Christianity °.

The Event of this Controversy, as far as it has been already carried on, has been, that every unnatural and inconsistent Distinction, all the Thorns of defining and dividing, as Tully calls them^p, with which the Author of the Nat. &c. of the Christian Sacraments had endeavoured to guard against Confutation, are quite given up to the Objections that had been brought against them°. He submits without any Reply to the Charge of misrepresenting Dr. Clarke's Sense, which he had made the Foundation of the Dispute, and is therefore convicted of raising the Dispute without Foundation^r.

He is willing to own that Dr. Clarke has taken notice of a Supernatural Grace going along with

° Dr. Stebbing's Pref. to Defence, p. 2. ^p Tully
Tusc. Disp. p. 272. Dav. Edit. ^q Comp. Excell. p. 27, &c.
^r Comp. Excell. p. 33, &c. Nat. &c. Sacr. p. 2.

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the Sacraments in his posthumous Sermons^r : For he says, That by the Spirit of God Grace is annexed to the Ordinance partaken of by truly devout and well-disposed Minds; *this, he owns, is allowing a Supernatural Grace in the Sacrament. But he still insists upon it, that his Saying in his Exposition, that there is a certain Grace annexed to it by the Will and Appointment of God by which it is made a Sacrament, and distinguished from other Rites that are merely significant of our Obligation and Duty, is taking no notice of any supernatural Assistance belonging to it . This is the Author, that complains so loudly of being misrepresented^a.*

We hear no more of his peculiar Sense of the Word Moral ; which he was sent to Aristotle^w, and I might add Tully^x and Stobæus^y to learn to understand.

His Distinction of Duties into Natural and Supernatural, which is used by other Authors in a very different Sense from^z his, is quite relinquished.

The Instances of Adam, Saul, Mary, which he had brought to prove a Preference of Positive to Moral Duties, are all turned against him, without any Defence ; and express Examples, that were alledged to the contrary, are left unanswered^a.

The very Passages he appears to cite out of Justin Martyr, and St. Austin, might have been shewn to be quoted by Vossius de vi Sacramentorum, for a very different Use from that which he makes of them ; and accordingly it has been proved, that when considered with the Context, or compared

^r Supplement, p. 37. No. X.

^t Expos. Cat. p. 286.

187.

^a Supplement, p. 1.

^w Comp. Excell. p. 13.

^x Tully de Fato. Dav. Edit. p. 265.

^y Stobæus Eclog.

Ethic. p. 184. Plant. Edit. το μὲν ἐν ἡδονῇ τὸν νόμον φησὶ λαβεῖν δὲ τὸ ἐν δόξῃ &c.

^z Vasquius Controvers. Illustrat. L. I. c. 29.

S. 14. Hooker's Eccles. Pol. p. 90, 91. Hobbs de Hom p. 74.

^a Comp. Excell. p. 78, 79.

with other Places in the same Authors, they are either nothing to his purpose, or full against him^b. All this is patiently submitted to without Contradiction, both by himself and his Advocates; not the least Attempt is made to justify one of his Authorities that had been questioned, except an English Quotation out of Bingham, (of which more hereafter;) and the better to conceal the Omission of the others, the Essayer artfully calls this the Instance of Misrepresentation produced against him^c, as if it was the only one objected, whereas it is really only one out of several others that are quite neglected.

When these and many other Particulars in which the Substance of the Dispute lies have been so unanswerably confuted, that they are in his own Words left to shift for themselves^d, it would be unnecessary to trouble the World any further with the Dispute, had not some other dangerous Notions been since advanced in Support of our Author's Doctrine, that deserve to be particularly examined; and had not our Author himself endeavoured to avoid the Force of every thing that has been proved against him, by declaring, that the Whole was founded on a false Representation of what he had said^{ea}. To do him therefore the most ample Justice possible, to cut off all Pretences of Misrepresentation and bring the Strength of the Argument on both Sides into one general view; I shall consider the Supplement, as far as it relates to the main Question, Paragraph by Paragraph so particularly, that I should be glad if the Reader would take the Trouble to compare every single Position in it, with the Answer that shall be here given; this Answer I shall mostly take from the Reasonings of other Writers on this Subject, particularly Bishop Cumberland, who our Author says per-

^b Comp. Excell. p. 82. 83.

gat. p. 78. ^d Supplement, p. 2.

^c Essay on Mor. Oblig.

^{ea} Supplement, p. 23.

feely

fectly agrees with him^e: Wherein the Bishop's Scheme of Morality, as far as it denies the Reasons of Things to be in themselves obligatory, is defective, I shall afterwards consider.

As to the Importance of the Dispute, which some Persons have affected to depretiate^e, besides what has been already said of its Use and Necessity; besides what Dr. Cudworth has proved, that the Moral and Eternal Differences of Good and Evil, are necessary to shew against the Atheist, that it is not Tyranny in God to give us a Law, nor Cruelty to punish us for the Breach of itⁱ; Besides that, we could not prove that there was actual much less immutable Benevolence in God, if Benevolence to others arose from a Regard to our selves^z, and was not in itself obligatory and right without any such Referenceⁿ, as will appear more hereafter; Besides that, as a wise Heathen Reasons, wicked Men would be apt to think, that they might safely commit Injustice, and appease God with a Share of the Plunder in Sacrifices and Oblations, unless Justice was naturally right, abstractedly from the Consideration of the divine Cognizanceⁱ; Besides all this, (which proves that establishing the Eternal Obligation of Virtue is of the first Consequence) I shall only observe, that the Use, which these very Men, who thus lessen the Controversy, make of the Principles here maintained against the Infidel, plainly shows, that they think them previously necessary to the Defence of Christianity itself; and therefore that the learned Author of the Defence, who has with so much Pains so effectually defended them against all Exception, has been

^e Supplement, p. 23.
Dr. Clarke, p. 2.

^{ee} Dr. Stebbing's Pref. to Def. of
^f Cudworth Intell. Syst. p. 662.

^z Essay on Moral Obligat. p. 40. ^h Cudworth Intell. System, p. 662. ⁱ Plato de Repub. L. 2. p. 364, 365. Serr. Edit. and p. 367.

doing the best Office, and what was first necessary, to the Memory of his Learned Friend, as well as to Religion; and as great a Friend to the Infidel's Person as some would have him thought, and as Christianity itself obliges him to be, has declared and proved himself to be the worst of Enemies to his Principles; and has been establishing those Truths, which when rightly applied, (as to do him Justice this Author has applied them^{*}) strike at the very Root, and Defeat the Designs of Infidelity.

^{*} Dr. Stebbing's Def. &c.





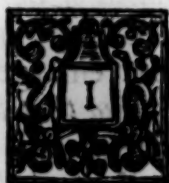
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Impartial Review

OF THE

SUPPLEMENT, &c.

Supp.
p. 1.



N the Beginning of his Discourse upon the Sacraments, the Author undertook *to guard the Subject more minutely against all Cavil, and Objection*: In the *Close* of it, he is content to think that he has not *so minutely guarded it*, as he proposed, but that still there may be room — *to strike new Light into the Subject*, and therefore declares, that he should be thankful to any Man that would undertake it. And yet here in the Beginning of his Supplement he seems *angry* with those, who at his own Desire have *resumed* the Argument; and repays the Thanks he had promised, with Censures, and Reproaches, drawn up in a very strange and particular Sort of Figure. *Whether they have treated the Subject in a rational or Christian Manner, he will not take upon him to say, let Indifferent Readers judge*; but so large Abatements does he charitably make of his former Insinuation, that though he is unwilling to say *they have treat-*
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ed the Subject irrationally or unchristianly, he will venture to affirm they have written immorally (and what can treating it in an irrational and unchristian Manner express more?) upon it, if they had not they would have succeeded better. As the Reader is appealed to for the Truth of the Charge, it may not be improper to give him an Instance or two of this immoral and unchristian Writing, that he may be better able to judge who is most justly chargeable with it.

Suppose then an Author should speak of *the Books of the New Testament, what our Saviour, and his Apostles both preached and wrote, both which are of equal Authority, because the same Spirit continued with them*^a, and within a few Lines afterwards should call the same Books, which he had before so fully described, *the Sermons of Christ and his Apostles*: Should an Adversary single out this last Expression from the rest that enlarge, and explain it, and from thence *hope aloud that the Author is not* (which speaks some Fear that he is) *of the Number of those, that are for excluding the Acts, and Epistles as of no Weight*^b, when every thing relating to Dr. Clarke, justifies him from the most distant Suspicions of this kind, his Expressions in this very Place, his Quotations out of the whole New Testament without Distinction in all his other Writings, the Reference he makes to one of the Epistles of St. Peter in the very next Page; *This*, I think is a notorious Instance of immoral, and unchristian Writing, and such as carries its own Shame, and Punishment along with it: For this innuendo Way of Writing is, says Dr. Waterland, *the Art of imposing on the Vulgar, and*

^a Expos. Cat. p. 45:
Cat. p. 31.

^b Remarks on Expos. of

at the same time preventing as far as possible, the Examination of the Learned^c.

Again, if an Author in condemning Idolatry, *Worship paid to Saints, Angels, and inanimate Things*, should add, that every thing of that kind is faulty besides the *Worship of him, who created the World by his Power, who redeemed Mankind by his Son, and who sanctifies all good Men by his Spirit^d*; (though we allow this to be a Character of God the Father only, yet) for an Adversary to say that this is excluding the *Worship of the Two other divine Persons*, — or designedly omitting it^e; when in another Place he justifies Bishop Bull for the same Sort of Expression; is *unchristian, and immoral*. Bishop Bull had said, that in the *Clementine Liturgy*, there is not one Prayer directed to Saint or Angel, but all to God, in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ. The Apology for Bishop Bull (and therefore for Dr. Clarke) is^f; Bishop Bull's (Dr. Clarke's) *Thoughts were Intent upon quite a different Thing from what he is here cited for, designing only to say that no Prayers were (ought to be) offered up to Angels, which made him say all to God in Opposition to that only*.

If thus changing Names will equally justify Dr. Clarke as Bishop Bull, to condemn one for the same Sort of Expression, which he justifies in the other, is an Argument not of a *single Misrepresentation*; but of a *Design to misrepresent*.

Again, to charge an Author with *Confining all Worship to the Father^g*, because he does not prove the *Worship of the Son, and Holy Ghost*, from the Lord's Prayer, — where the Remarkers him-

^c Pref. to Dr. Waterland's Sermons, p. 24.

^d Expof.

Catech. p. 24.

^e Remarks, &c. p. 6, 7.

^f Rem. p. 17.

^g Rem. p. 7. Expof. Cat. p. 230.

self owns, *no mention is made of Jesus Christ^b, or of the Holy Ghost.*

To charge him with *Omitting the supernatural Grace in the Sacrament*, when he expressly says, *that there is a Grace annexed to it by the Will, and Appointment of God*, whereby he distinguishes positively commanded from ceremonial Things; and to persevere in the Charge after the contrary has been so fully provedⁱ; these, and many more that I could produce, if they would come within the Compass of my Design, I take to be *Instances* or rather *Habits of immoral Writing*, and whatever Reward they may procure at present, will certainly draw their proper *Shame and Punishment* after them. Let our Author but prove one Instance of this Kind upon his Adversaries, those *immoral, irrational, and unchristian Writers*, it shall be admitted, as a sufficient Confutation of all they have said, or can say upon the Subject. But until some Proof of *this Kind* appears, the indifferent Reader will hardly think this Author's Notions have been much *misrepresented*; since the Effect of this *Misrepresentation* is, that he does not Attempt any longer to defend them, but *leaves them to shift as they are*; and flies off to other Things, which though allowed to be true, as he represents them, will not at all prove a Preference of positive to moral Duties in any Case; as I shall shew particularly, after I have considered his other Doctrines as they lye in Order.

^b Rem. p. 19.
p. 9, &c.

ⁱ Supplem p. 37. Comp. Excell.

I.

To make Moral Virtue binding previous to such Laws, as arise from the Command either of God or Man, is, he says, going on the Independent Bottom, (whatever that means,) it is setting up a Morality without (not the Being but the Command of a) Deity; it is supposing Obligation without (such a) Law, (as arises from the Command of a Superiour:) This is so palpably absurd, that the very naming of it is sufficient to confute it: For when we are inquiring into the Original of Laws, it is not absurd, but very consistent, to suppose their Obligation already known, or that they create their own Obligation, however Cumberland came to declare the contrary^k. This Doctrine further supposes a Religion of Nature without (not the Existence but the Command of a) Deity: Monstrous again, to suppose that there is a Worship due to God founded on the Excellence and Perfection of his Nature, as Dr. Waterland maintains there is^l. Nay, it is further supposed by these Independent Bottom Principles, that there may be Duty, without a Superiour to whom it is owing; To name such an Inconsistency is sufficient to confute it, for how absurd is it to say, that a Man's Desire to be loved of his Equals, as much as possible, imposeth on him a natural Duty of bearing to them-ward fully the like Affection? however Hooker came to think so^m. But all these flagrant Absurdities with which the greatest Names stand charged by our Author's Doctrine, arise only from his low restrained Sense of the Word Law, as if it signified nothing else, but, as Hobbes ex-

^k Cumb. de Leg. Nat. p. 173. 345.
Waterland's Sermon. p. 46, 47.

^l Pref. to Dr. Hooker's Eccles. Pol. p. 81.

^m Hooker's Eccles. Pol. p. 82.

plains it, ^a that Rule of working, which superiour Authority imposeth; whereas this very Definition supposes some other Rule that gives to the Superiour, and satisfies the Inferiour of, this Right and Authority. Law therefore in general must signify any kind of Rule by which Actions are framed^o; that which doth assign to each Thing the kind, that which doth moderate the Force and Power, that which doth appoint the Form or Measure of Working, is properly called a Law^p; that which doth direct us to choose certain Actions before others, or to give to every one his due, which was the Meaning of the Word Law among the Greeks and Romans, and the Original of the Name^q. This Law is nothing else, but the Act of the Understanding, which like a dumb Magistrate, says Tully^r, like a deputed Magistrate, says Cumberland^s, endued with a Power of making Laws, commands a thing to be done, and sufficiently teaches a natural Obligation by shewing a thing to be best both for our selves and others; which is the only thing that can lay a Necessity on the Mind of doing, or forbearing^t, which sufficiently constitutes the Nature and Essence of a Law^u; contrary to which a Man cannot be obliged by any just Law^x, which is therefore a Law for the Community of all rational Beings^y. To derive then all Right and Obligation from Law may not be amiss, says Tully, if by Law be meant, as

^a Hobbes de Cive. cap. 3. S. 33. Hooker's Eccles. Pol. p. 32. S. 3.

^o Hooker. Ibid.

^p Hooker's Eccles. Pol.

p. 70. S. 2.

^q Tully de leg. p. 22, 23. Dav. Edit. cam- que rem Illi Græco putant nomine, à suum cuique tribuendo, (νόμος) adpellatam, Ego nostro, à legendo; nam ut Illi æquitatis, sic nos delectus vim in lege ponimus.

^r Tully de Leg. p. 184.

^s Cumberl. p. 174.

^t Cumberl.

p. 240.

^u Cumb. de leg. Nat. p. 343.

^x Puffendorff's

Law of Nat. p. 25. B. I. c. 3. S. 2.

^y Cumb. p. 5. 225.

Philo de Jos. p. 414.

Learned Men define it, the highest Reason implanted in Nature; the same Reason, when it is finished and complete in Mens Minds is a Law^a. Such a Law as this existed in all Ages, before any Law was written^a, or even before any thing was created; for there are eternal Truths in Ethicks relating to Morality ---- that were not made so at some certain times by Law, or arbitrary Command, but being such in their own Nature immutably, from everlasting to everlasting, and as it is said of that eternal Word, that comprehends all Truth, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever^b. The immutable Verity of these practical Propositions arises from the necessary Connection of their Terms, and their Eternity appears from their necessary Truth; for it is not to be doubted, but they were true whenever they could be thought of, and therefore always necessarily known to the divine Mind; such a Truth as this, no one denies to Mathematical Propositions, though lately invented; as therefore it was eternally true, that three Lines drawn according to Euclid's first Proposition, would make a certain sort of Triangle, and yet a Man is entirely at Liberty whether he will draw them or not^c: So was it eternally true, that to certain things, existing in a certain manner, certain Duties would belong, as much, as if they had been necessarily existing; and yet God was perfectly free whether he would create them or not. Abstractedly from the actual Existence of a Thing which depends upon a free Cause, we may consider the necessary Effects and Properties of it^d. There was no Necessity there should be Matter or Body, but there is an absolute Necessity there should be Truth^e.

^a Tully de leg. p. 22. Dav. Edit.

^a Ibid p. 23, 24.

^b Cudworth Intell. System, p. 728.

^c Cumb. Proleg.

S. 28.

^d Cumb p. 9.

^e Cudworth's Intell. Syst. p. 678,

736,

So that by the *Essences of things being eternal must not be meant their very Substances, as if every thing were in itself eternal and uncreated*^f; This Notion, which he had spoke of before^g, Puffendorf justly condemns in the Quotation our Author has made from him, as *introducing an external Principle coeval with God*^h, but he never meant to charge their Doctrine with any such Consequence, who maintain an eternal Rule of Morality, agreeably to the Theory of Things in the divine Mind, and the constituted Natures of them, when created, in Opposition to its being derived from mere Will and Pleasure. He cannot mean any thing of this kind, without being inconsistent both with himselfⁱ, and with what Barbeyrac remarks of him^k, *On this they ought to reflect, who lay down for a fundamental Principle of the Law of Nature the Will of God; affirming that there is no great Difference between this, and our Author's Hypothesis: All therefore that is meant by the Reasons of Things being eternal, is, as Cudworth adds, That their possible and intelligible Natures were so, as they were Objects of infinite Power and Wisdom before they were made; which God was not obliged to exemplify in real things, and put into actual Existence, any otherwise, than as his own intrinsick Wisdom and Goodness disposed him to do it; and therefore not by any external, coeval Principle*^l. Thus is every external Principle excluded, and the Liberty of the divine Creation reconciled with the eternal, necessary, and inviolable Reasons of Things.

In the same manner may the necessary Existence of God be proved from the *Necessity of infinite*

^f Cudworth's Intell. Syst. p. 728.

L. N. p. 14, 19. B. 1. ch. 2. S. 2.

ⁱ Ibid. p. 19, 20, 122.

and 5.

^g Puffendorff's

^h See p. 346. Ibid.

^k Ibid. B. 2. ch. 3. S. v. Note 3,

^l Cumb. p. 346.

Extension, or of eternal Truths and Intelligibles ^m, the necessary Properties of the divine Being, without any external Principle. This may be properly called proving it *a priori*, since the Proof is not taken from any Effect that God has produced; and excludes all external Principles, since it is made from the necessary Properties of the divine Nature; and because it is taken from these necessary Properties, it is therefore just and conclusive; for the Properties of things are what we are first acquainted with, by which we come to know any thing of the Subject. And *because a Property cannot in Order of Nature be antecedent to its Subject*, for that very Reason it will undeniably follow, that if we cannot but apprehend a Property to be necessarily-existing; there must be a Subject in which it inheres, that is so too. But to return with him to the Matter in Hand.

If there was any Design at all in the Contrivance of Things, that must needs be in the Knowledge and Intention of the Maker, before the actual Existence of the Things made ⁿ; and consequently there must be pre-existing Reasons and Relations of Things, the Objects of this Knowledge, antecedent to any Act of the divine Will, and by which this Will must be determined to prefer one Design to another, otherwise there remains only Chance, or Fate, or I know not what other extrinsick Principle, into which all must be resolved^o; for to suppose God to understand, or be wise only by his Will, is all one as to suppose him to have really no Understanding at all^p: If therefore God was the Contriver of Nature, if he contrived it not by Chance, Fate, or any

^m Cudworth's Intell. Syst. p. 736, 737. ⁿ Cudworth's Intell. Syst. p. 678. ^o Cumb. p. 289, 290. ^p Cudworth's Intell. Syst. p. 646, 647, 717.

external Influence, but by Reason and Knowledge, then there were eternally certain necessary Relations of Things, the Objects of the divine Knowledge, that determined his Will and Design, and therefore are to be considered as antecedent, and previous to it.

And thus the most judicious, both Antients and Moderns, considered this Matter, as may be seen in Selden, who after many express Quotations to this Purpose, adds, There are many other Places in Tully, Plato, Plutarch, and other Philosophers as well as Divines — in which they maintain, that after certain Data, there arises from right Reason alone, certain Precepts, and Prohibitions universally obligatory, &c. the moral Philosophers, says Cumberland used to consider the Laws, or Dictates of Reason, without Proof that they have the necessary Form of a Law, or are enacted by God. Herein, says Tully, the Stoicks, Peripateticks, and Academicks agreed, that Virtue was desirable on its own Account, and that otherwise it would be impossible to make out any Law of Nature.

*From the Nature of Man therefore, which he said was the Fountain of Law to him, he proceeds to deduce the Law of Nature; which is really the eternal Wisdom, and Reason of God, and may be said to be given to Man, as Philosophy was given him. This Reason, both in God and Man, must necessarily have a Power of establishing what is Right, * such a Power has it, that it would make a thinking Man afraid of doing any thing amiss, though he were sure to conceal it both from God, and*

^a Selden de. P. N. and G. C. 7. p. 136, 7. Wilk. Edit.

^r Cumb. Prolegom. S. 3. p. 14. 275.

p. 5. Bleau. Edit. de leg. p. 68.

Cumb. p. 259.

^t Tully de off. p. 20.

^u De leg. p. 86, 7. Tusc. p. 63.

^x De leg. p. 87.

Man, as Plato says ^y such a Power, that it would make any Man choose to gain the Advantages of Life by honest, rather than dishonest Means, if he could do both equally well ^z without this there could be no such thing as Duty, or Piety towards God or Man^a, but so evident, and cogent is this natural Obligation, that we know what is Duty and what not, as naturally as we distinguish Truth from Falsehood; Consequences from Contraries ^b. In all this Tully speaks, together with his own, Socrates and Plato's Sentiments of those Matters, whose Opinion he declares he was willing to follow even without Proof^c. And therefore it might be unnecessary to quote any thing from Plato himself to this Purpose, but as his and Socrates's Authority, that fetched Morality from Heaven says Tully, that first introduced it, says Laertius^d, that was the Pillar, and Wall of Philosophy, says Justin Martyr^e will be of such Weight in the Case, it may be useful to see how they conceived of these Matters.

One of the main Principles of all Plato's Philosophy was that the Forms, and Essences of Things were necessary and eternal, that they could neither begin, nor cease to be what they are ^f, and therefore that they were eternal Objects of Thought and Reason, of Choice and Preference. He calls Mind the Queen of Heaven and Earth, and affirms our Reason was derived from it ^g. He styles Virtue the Health, the Beauty, the good Habit of the Soul^h. He compares it to Harmony in Mu-

^y De Fin. B. Edit. p. 212. de off. p. 124. L. 2. ^z De Fin. p. 211.

^a De leg. p. 52, 53. de Fin. p. 227.

^b De leg. p. 54, 55.

^c Tusc. Disp. p. 49.

^d Diog.

Laert. p. 10, 12. Menag. Edit. Tully de Clar. Orat. p. 12. S. 31.

^e Justin Martyr, p. 150.

^f Plato Tim.

p. 484. 5. Meno. p. 86. Diog. Laert. p. 173, 4. Tully Orator. ad Brut. p. 135. S. 10.

^g Plato Phileb. p. 28.

^h Plato de Repub. L. 4. p. 444. Cumb. p. 218.

sickⁱ, and says it consists in Reason's governing the Passions, and a Man's being Master of, and consistent with himself^k, which Reason ought to command as a Magistrate does in a Commonwealth^l. He shews that it is best to practise Virtue, whether our Actions are discovered, or concealed^m, and that without it, no other Advantages in Life can make us happy. This he says in Answer to Glauco, who had maintained, that if both a just and an unjust Man had Gyges's Ring, by which they could do any thing unseen, and unpunished, they would both, under this Security invade other Men's Rights, and had therefore desired to know, what Excellence there was in Virtue it self, though it should be concealed which should make it desirable on its own Account as Socrates had taught it wasⁿ. Aristotle, though he denied Plato's Ideas, though, as some think, not in the Sense Plato meant, clearly delivers the same Notion, in a different way. The whole Design of his Ethicks to Nicom. is to shew the End Men ought to propose, which is Happiness^o; the Subject of that End, which is the Soul, or Mind of Man^p, and the necessary Means to it, which is Virtue of all Sorts. And in this Book of his as well as his other Writings, there are many Passages to this Purpose, that there are some Things naturally right that have the same Force every where: Right by Nature, and right by Law is a settled Distinction with him^q. The same were the Notions of the Italick Sect that owned, and followed Pythagoras, as Stobæus testi-

ⁱ Ibid. p. 443.

272, 3.

ⁿ De Repub. L. 2. p. 358, 9, 367, 631.^p L. 1. c. 13.

l. 5. c. 43.

^k Ibid. p. 442. Tully Tusc. p. 195.^l Ibid. p. 439, 441.^m Ibid. p. 445.^o L. 1.^q Ad Nicom. l. 5. c. 10. Rhetor.

fies^r; and Hierocles well explains^r; and some of their Fragments still shew. ^r This Opinion therefore of the natural Excellence, and Obligation of Virtue, was not peculiar to any Sect or Country, but was common to them all, even the Epicureans, says Bishop Cumberland^u, which Clem. Alexandrinus somewhere makes a Mark of Truth. And accordingly it was followed by the most judicious Christian Writers, who speak often of those Things *that are just and honourable by Nature*^x, of eternally just Actions *ἀνὰ τὴν φύσιν δίκαια*^y, in Opposition to Things positively commanded for the Hardness of Mens Hearts; All Men, says Justin Martyr, *have a natural Sense of what is Good in it self except those, who have corrupted, or extinguished their natural Notions; for all are unwilling to suffer the same Injustice they do to others, and are ready to reproach one another with any Thing that is Wrong*^z. We hear indeed Nothing of the Word Obligation among the Antients, an improper metaphorical Word, as Bishop Cumberland calls it^a, which has occasioned much Confusion in those Matters, (Seneca I think, is one of the first that used it, and says we are brought under it by knowing what is good and Evil^o) but they speak of Virtue being right in it self, being agreeable to a rational Nature, being necessary to Happiness, carrying Arguments with it sufficient to induce us to practise it, which is

^r Stobæus Serm. 5. Ellog. Ethick. l. 2. c. 3. p. 163. ^r Hi-

erocles in Aur. Carm. p. 176, 209, 210, 310. Lond. Edit. Jamblichus de Sect. Pyth. l. 2. c. 11, 12.

^x Justin Martyr, p. 31. Archytas de Mor. ^y Theagis de

visut. p. 31. Archytas de Mor. ^u P. 277, 281.

^z Justin Martyr, p. 227. ^y Ibid. p. 231, 192, 342. p.

^a Justin Martyr, p. 342. See Clem. Alexandr. p. 373. Origen.

Contr. Cels. p. 179, 180. Spenc. Edit. Chrysostom. orat. ad Pop.

Antioch. p. 75. ^a Cumb. p. 206, 240. ^b Seneca

Epist. 95.

all the intelligible Sense the Word *Obligation* can bear.^c

Full as expressly do the most judicious among the *Moderns* speak of the natural Obligation of Virtue. *The Knowledge of every thing in the World*, says the judicious Hooker, — *serveth to administer Laws, and Canons; for Men to direct their Actions by, which we properly term Humane: This did the very Heathens themselves obscurely intimate, by making Themis, which we call just, or right, to be the Daughter of Heaven, and Earth^d. — These are grand Mandates, which being imposed by the Understanding, must be obeyed by the Will of Man^e.*

And that this was Grotius's settled Opinion, (however our Author comes to question it) appears not only from the Method, and Nature of his whole Work, in which he constantly considers, first what is right in itself, and then what Alterations the Command of God has or can make in our Duty; but also from many express Passages in his Book^f, where he explains this Notion at large, and confirms it by many ancient Authorities, which may be added to those before produced; and of what Authority this Book is among the Learned Moderns, may be seen from Cumberland's Character of it, *That it was worthy of its Author, and deserved to be immortal^g.* Thus much may suffice to satisfy the Essayer, (without shewing that the general Quotations he has made are little to his purpose) *that all the best Moralphilosophers are not so clearly with him, as he imagined, and that there are more than Grotius and Dr. Clarke that have maintained the eternal natu-*

^c Cumb. p. 257, and 81.

^d Hooker's Eccles. Pol.

p. 82.

^e Ibid. p. 84.

^f Grot de

J B & P. L. 1. c. x. S. 2. Note 81. S. 1. N. 10.

^g Cumb.

Prolegom. S. 1.

ral Obligation of the Reasons of Things, however his *great Reading* suffered him to affirm the contrary ^h. It would be easy to pour in a Number of Quotations upon him from Essays, Sermons, Pamphlets, Letters, from Forty Years date to Four, to the same purpose: Nay, I could give him living modern Authorities of considerable Name, if those would satisfy him; but it is quite unnecessary, since as *Cumberland* says, *Hobbes and Selden are the Chief, that deny the Dictates of Reason to be naturally obligatory*: For what reason *Hobbes* did it, every one knows; and *Selden's* Design to accommodate all Law to that of the *Jews*, might lead him to consider the Law of Nature, as formally enacted by God; or he might be apt to conceive of the Law of Nature in this way, through *that Prejudice*, which Lord *Bacon* ^k observes, *attends Men of his Profession*, which makes them *ex vinculis ratiocinari*, as he expresses it; and because they are accustomed to consider those Laws only that are enacted by a Superiour, they are apt to reduce all Laws to the same Foundation. And this its more likely was *Selden's* Case, because he allows, that these Dictates of Reason, though they do not strictly oblige, do *quasi obligare* ^l, and all that is wanting in his Opinion to make a compleat Obligation, is only *a superintending Power* ^m; whereas pure Power I think can never create Obligation. But to descend with him to Particulars.

^h Essay on Mor. Obligation, Note, p. 46.
gom. S. 3.

c. 3.
p. 148.

^k Bacon de Augment. Scientiæ, l. 8.
^l Selden de J. N. & G. p. 150.

ⁱ Prole-

^m Ibid.

Our Author cannot conceive how
 P. 6. N. 1. *Virtue, or Obligation* should belong to
 God; He may be said to have *Per-*
fection, but how can he be said to have *Virtue*?
 And to his purpose *Tully*^a speaks that *Virtue* is
 so called, from *vir*, because it is the Excellence
 of a *Man*, how then can it with any Propriety
 be ascribed to *God*? Why; the same *Tully* tells us,
That Virtue is the same both in God and Man, being
nothing else but the Perfection of Reason, than which
nothing can be better either in God, or Man^o; which
both have in common, and therefore a common Law:
Which Reason he calls Divine, or as Euripides
Terms it, God^p. Epicurus therefore in effect
takes away the Being of a God, when he denies that
Justice, and all sort of Virtue belongs to him, without
which he would neither have Happiness, or Majesty^o.
But he has Temperance, and all sort of Virtue with-
out Mixture of Vice, and practising these Virtues is
having our Conversation with him^r. For though
 he is not subject to the Command of any *Super-*
riour, and therefore cannot be obliged by any
positive Law, which supposes a *Superiour*; yet his
intrinsic, and constant Perfection will always deter-
mine him to agree with his all-knowing Understand-
ing, and are always a Law to him^s. So that, as
 the Learned Author of the Defence well expresses
 it, *where there was no Law, or Command of a*
Superiour, there was the highest Obligation possible^t.
 Not indeed such an Obligation as *God* is under

^a *Tusc. Disp.* p. 164. *Adpellata est enim ex viro virtus.*
^o *De leg.* p. 28, 31, 2, 54. *De Fin.* p. 200. *De Nat. D.*
 p. 48. *Cumb.* p. 223, 257. ^p *Tusc. Disp.* p. 65.
Justin Martyr, p. 15, 145. *Aristot. ad Nicom.* l. 5. c. 10.
^r *Cumb.* p. 381. ^s *Cumberland,* p. 226. ^t *Justin*
Martyr, p. 11, 12, 14. ^t *Cumberland,* p. 225,
 345, 347, 354. ^u *Defence, &c.* p. 6.

to exist, since as the same Author judiciously observes, his *Existence is perfectly necessary*^u, there was no previous Knowledge in himself, no previous Act of his Will, no Exercise of his natural Powers to do any thing, no Possibility of doing otherwise in relation to his Existence; but all was unavoidable unchosen *Necessity*; and therefore, as the same Author justly adds, There is no Excellence, or Dignity in his pure necessary Existence, any more than there is in necessary infinite Power, *which has no more Worth in it, than a Mass of Lead of infinite Weight*, says Cumberland^v: So that if God's Goodness, and Justice, and therefore Will that is directed by them, were necessary in the same manner, as his Existence is, it would not only deprive him of *all just Honour*, upon account of *this involuntary Passion, and Affection of Goodness, and Justice*^y, but would make every thing that is or will be done, or commanded by him, perfectly *fatal*, and thereby hinder Duty and Virtue from depending on his Will, as much as any other Scheme does, as well as destroy all Motives, and Inducements to practise it. But God is determined to be good, and virtuous by the same moral Necessity only, that a humane Understanding and Will are, or should be determined through the Force of the obliging Arguments; by which they would be determined did not Men's Ignorance, or corrupt Affections, like a Fraud in the Scale, defeat their Efficacy^z. The Manner and Reason of the Determination is the same both in God and Man; the Effect often different, because

^u True Foundation of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 9.

^x Cumb. p. 226.

^y Aristot. ad Nic.

com. l. 2.

^z Cumberland, p. 90. S. x. p. 213.

Men have Weaknesses and corrupt Affections, by which they are often perverted; God has none, and therefore is always influenced by the obliging Arguments; which is the true Notion of Obligation^a.

Next from God let us descend to his
P. 7. N. 2. *Creatures, who are obliged to Duty and Virtue, not only by the Law of the most High, but by the Force of the obliging Arguments, by the Reasons, and Fitnesses of Things alone, without any such Law. Though we abstract the Command of a Deity the Obligation will remain, whether Virtue is convenient for us in any particular Circumstances or not. For right Reason does not permit, that a Man should make the greatest Good he can desire or imagine his last End; for since that is truly a good Action that directly leads to the truly ultimate End, supposing different ultimate Ends opposite to one another, good Actions will likewise be opposite, which is absurd; for Instance, if right Reason teaches Titius, that the End he is to seek after consists in the Enjoyment of full Property over the Life and Fortune of Caius; right Reason cannot teach Caius that his End consists in Enjoying the same over Titius — but since there is no Reason, why one Man's Happiness should be an end to him, any more than another's to him; we ought to conclude that right Reason teaches no one to propose his own Happiness as his ultimate End, but as it is consistent with the Happiness of all others^b; for let Hobbes tell us what Effect the adding a Name of any individual has to make that Proposition of taking Care of One's own Happiness, truer of one than it*

^a Cumb. p. 257.
216.

^b Cumberland, p. 215.

is of all others^c. Our Author's *Caius* or *Titius* therefore, are not to consider what is fit for their own separate Happiness, but what is right in itself, what is fit for general Happiness, in which their own is contained, and on which it depends. *The advantage a Man is to pursue, is not what is sufficient for himself only, but for his Parents and Children, &c.* Since Man is by Nature a political Being^d. And therefore it is not unreasonable for a Man to lay down his Life for publick Good, if necessary^e; Bishop Cumberland thought it his Duty to do it on a natural Consideration^f. Since right Reason teaches us rather to dye than submit to some Things^g — to speak, and act those Things that are right, though Death should be threatened us on that Account^h. This, as hard a Saying as it is, is all Things considered sufficiently practicable. For though, as *Hobbes* objected, it may not secure us perfect Happiness here; yet it is the best Method of Happiness we can pursueⁱ. And as Cumberland observes out of *Seneca*, we ought not to deliberate about the Parts, but about the whole of Life^k. On this Principle we submit to the Laws, and Decisions of Civil Government, though we may often suffer by them^l. This is the same Prudence as to choose the best Chance at Dice, though it may not always succeed^m. For as Merchandize, and Tillage of Ground is profitable, not only if one is free from all Shipwreck, and the other from Blasts, but if Success attends both in the greater Part; so Life is happy not only if it is prosperous in every Respect, but if in

^c Cumberland, p. 219.

^d Aristot. ad Nicom.

L. 1.

^e Cumberland, p. 285.

^f Cum-

berland, p. 68, 233.

^g Aristot. ad Nicom. L. 3.

^h Justin Martyr, p. 4.

ⁱ Cumberland, p. 302,

221.

^k Ibid. p. 302.

^l Cumberland,

p. 51.

^m Cumberland, p. 322, 3.

the greater and more important Parts the Good exceeds the Evilⁿ.

If therefore the Practice of Virtue secures us that Happiness, which Morality is to direct us to^o; the τὸ ἐφ' ἡμῶν, the Happiness that depends on our selves; (since we can no more be taught how certainly to avoid Injuries from others, than we can be taught to prevent external Accidents.) If no other Advantages in the greatest Abundance without Virtue can make us happy^p; if it is the most probable Way of gaining the Favour, and good Offices of others^q; if it gives us a Likeness to God, and secures his Favour^r; the Protection of his Providence^t, and a Reward from him^t; on which the Heathens founded their Hopes of Immortality^u, and which we cannot deny to be a sufficient Ground of Hope, without affirming, that every thing was made by Chance^w; It will follow, that Virtue is the best and most eligible Means of a happy Life^x. And therefore on a natural Consideration sufficiently practicable, since by these Motives some have been actually induced to die for their Country^y. To act therefore in such a Manner, as not to violate the Life, the Reputation, or the Rights of others, but to do them Good, deserves to be distinguished by the Name of Virtue^z. Such a Disposition of Mind is Prudence; and not Folly; the only Folly is for Men not to see, that their Duty to others, is a necessary Means of their own

ⁿ Tully Tusc. p. 408, 9. Cumb. Proleg. S. xxi. p. 183

^o Cumberland, p. 78, 31, 210, 216. Tully de fin. p. 192.

^p Cumberland, p. 281, 2, 262.

^q Cumberland,

222, 285. p.

^r Cumb. p. 220.

^t Cum-

berland, p. 32. Æschines orat. adv. Ktes. p. 25. Tully de N. D. p. 162.

^u Cumb. p. 225.

^w Tully

Tusc. p. 44, 5, 71. Plato Phæd. p. 385, 398. Serr. Edit.

^x Cumberland, p. 279.

^y Tully Tusc. p. 396.

^z Tully Tusc. p. 33. Sextus Empiricus adv. Math. p. 456.

Genev. Edit.

^z Cumberland, p. 43, 210.

Happiness,

Happiness, as *Hobbes* himself owns, and *Cumberland* confirms^a: Nay, this is not only a sufficient Foundation for real *Virtue*; but as good a Foundation as the Command of God himself; since, as *St. John* reasons^b, *If we know that he is righteous, we know that every one that doth righteousness is born of him, loveth him, and will be approved by him as certainly, as if we know that he commandeth Righteousness, we know that every one that keepeth his word, in him dwelleth the love of God.* Whereas according to our Author's Doctrine no disadvantageous *Virtue* can ever be practicable; for suppose we conclude by natural Reasoning, (not by Revelation, and an express Promise of Reward annexed to it, which is out of the Question) that God commands us a certain Duty, to die for the publick Good, for instance; the Reason, says our Author, why this is practicable by God's Command, when it would not be without it, is, because God by commanding it, is a Security to us, that we shall not be finally Losers by the Practice of it; in proportion therefore to the Security of a future Reward, the Obligation to this Duty was greater or less. If therefore the wisest Heathens, though they looked up to a Deity whereon to found their Morality^c, had nevertheless such faint Hopes of a future Reward, as were neither certain enough to be depended upon, nor clear enough to be of any great use^d: If little or nothing can at this Day be proved by natural Reasoning of a future Reward^e, all which our Author expressly asserts in the Places referred to; then the Heathens had not formerly, nor have at present Certainty enough of

^a *Cumberland*, p. 55. 329.
^b *2 John* i. 29.
^c Supplement, p. 4.
^d Supplement, p. 56.

^e Supplement, p. 55.

^f Supplement.

a Compensation to oblige them to die for publick Good, or practise any other disadvantageous Virtue ; and therefore the Nero's and Catalines of their Times did prudently in being wise for themselves preferably to others ; there is at once an End of all Virtue, and Duty, unless the Reasons of Things are in themselves binding, separate from the Consideration of Rewards, and Punishments ; which being the Effects of pure Power, cannot themselves oblige, but only hold those faster that are obliged'.

How well this Tallies with the
 Supp. p. 10. *Scripture Account is very evident, by which we are required, to follow whatever things are true, honest, just, or of good Report ; and something is supposed to be laudable and virtuous, considered in itself ; in which we are commanded, not indeed to be Hypocrites, to pretend to that Virtue which we really want, and to do good Offices for Temporal Ends, while we continue still Sinners ; and have no internal Principle of Love, and Benevolence ;^s or to confine our Regard and good Offices to some few only from whom we have received, or expect an equivalent^h, but to be merciful from the same Principle of generous, universal Benevolence, that God is merciful, and thereby be perfect even as he is perfect, for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. As this Godliness is profitable for all things, we may, says Cumberland, have some regard to the Temporal Advantages of Virtueⁱ, but we should principally respect the more honourable Rewards that attend it, — a more extensive Knowledge of God, — a Conformity of our Nature with the Divine, — a*

^f Cudworth's Intell. Syst p. 195.

^h Matt. v. 43 to 48.

^s 1 John iii. 18.

ⁱ Cumberland, p 258.

Dominion of Reason over the corrupt Affections, which produces Tranquillity of Mind, and may be considered as a Sanction to the Law of right Reason^k.

Revelation has indeed now added fresh Enforcements, by annexing greater Rewards, and Punishments to our Duty; and it is no wonder that it chiefly insists on those Arguments, and Motives, which itself has proposed; (though it still reproves us for *not judging of our selves what is right*, not being as wise in moral, as we are in natural things) it is no wonder, that it chiefly refers us to the Examples of Persons that were supported by these extraordinary Motives, under strong Temptations, to encourage all, especially the Primitive Christians, to bear up under the greater Difficulties of Revealed Religion, *which was the great Reason*, says Bishop Cumberland, *why these greater Rewards were proposed^l*; but yet it still allows that Virtue is by its own Reason, (*as we are Members one of another^m*;) by its own Goodness, (*as love is the bond of perfectnessⁿ*;) by its Necessity to Peace, and Happiness, (*that we be not devoured one of another^o*;) by its Usefulness to secure us *Peace in our own Minds, and Confidence with God^p, and good Days from others, (for who is he that will harm us if we are followers of that which is good^q?)* obligatory upon us, and for the same Reasons highly approved of by God himself, *since to have a Will determined by a Rule, or Reason of Good, is not the Virtue of weak, and obnoxious Beings only, or of such as have a Superiour to give them Law; neither is it the Prerogative of a*

^k Cumberland. Prolegom. S. xx. p. 259, 260.

^l Cumb.

p. 285.

^m Ephes. iv. 25.

ⁿ Collofs. iii. 14.

Pfalm. cxxxiii. 1.

^o Galat. v. 15.

^p 1 John iii.

20, 21,

^q 1 Peter iii. 10, 13.

Being infinitely powerful to have a Will absolutely indifferent to all things, and undetermined by any thing but itself^r; though his Power sets him beyond any want of other Beings, and out of the Reach of Misery from them, yet acting contrary to the Reasons of Things, would make him contradict and miserable in himself^r; and though Creatures may run Risques upon account of the Power others have to hurt them; yet they run the least Risques by constantly adhering to what is right, without which they cannot be happy in any State, and which is the only way to secure that Happiness here, which this State will admit, as well as a certain Reward hereafter, and is therefore sufficiently obligatory, setting aside the Consideration of the divine Command.

It was objected, as a Supp. P. 11. N. 1. Consequence of this Author's Doctrine, that it was the arbitrary Will of God, whether Vice should be equally approved by him, as Virtue; and as close a Consequence it is as ever was drawn, for what is commendable or excellent, if we depart from the Nature of that, which is so in itself? What hinders Will from destroying what is made by Will^u? the Greatness of this Being can never hinder it, if by Greatness he means Power, since this gives him a more uncontrollable Liberty of Willing any Thing. And before his Goodness can be supposed to prevent him from approving Vice, it must be proved that he is a perfectly good Being without Mixture of Evil, which the present State of Things cannot prove, since all allow, that a fu-

* Cudworth's Intell. System, p. 873, 874.

Prolegom. S. iv.

^r Tully de leg. p. 60.

^u Cudworth's Intell. Syst. p. 893, 4. Cumb. p. 408.

^r Cumb.

^u Cud-

ture State is necessary to satisfy perfect Goodness; and how can we answer the Objection which the Atheist draws from the present State of Things against the divine Goodness, but by saying, as some of the wiser Heathens did, that Mind being the Maker of Heaven and Earth, the *τὸ Βίβλον*, so far as the Necessity of Things will admit, is the Rule, and Measure both of Nature and Providence^w? Nay it must be proved that God is not only Good, but immutably so, before we can be sure that he can never change so as to approve Evil. But to be immutable is inconsistent with an arbitrary Principle^x. If Will is the Principle of the divine Actions, it is manifestly his Perfection to change, because it is acting agreeably to his Nature, for it is the Nature of an arbitrary Principle, to act or not, to do and undo upon no Account, but it's own Will; to be determined, or tied up either by it self, or from Abroad is violent, and contra-natural^y; as therefore his Will was at first determined without Reason, (for so it is supposed, otherwise there are Reasons in Things that determined it) so it may equally well, determine it self a contrary Way without Reason. If therefore God is immutably Good, it must arise either from his being fatally and necessarily so, without Reason, Will, Choice, or Regard to any Thing; and therefore indiscriminately, infinitely, and uniformly good at all Times, to all Persons in equal Degrees; incapable of exercising Justice, or bringing Evil on any for their Demerit, or obliged to punish for the Good of the Person punished, as the Infidel would have it^z; or if this cannot be so, the Immuta-

^w Cudworth's Intell. System, p. 670.

^x Cumberland, p. 67. Arbitrium—temerè ab his utrisque discedit.

^y Bishop Ruff's Remains, p. 26, 27.

^z Christianity as old as the Creation, ch. iv.

^z Christianity as

bility of his Goodness must arise, from his being Good by certain Rule, Reason, and Wisdom^a, (as the Evils or various Degrees of Perfection in Things undeniably prove him to be) which will allow of a Variation of Goodness according to the various Demerit of Persons, or Reasons of Things; but at the same Time supposes, that there are certain Fittests, and Reasons in Things, by and in Proportion to which God is determined to be good rather than otherwise^b; and therefore is immutably good, because good according to these Reasons that are immutable. Otherwise there would be no more Difference between a good and evil God, *than between a Nero, and a Titus*; if *their Will constituted the Nature of good and evil^c*. To suppose therefore nothing to be fit in it self previous to Appointment, is to suppose that God's Wisdom might not see it fitter to be good rather than evil, and therefore that he may be equally either, or by Chance, or fatal Necessity destructive of all Choice, Freedom, or Excellence, is one rather than the other; that is that *he may be God, and no God*, may not be fit to be trusted, and therefore not to be obeyed. And by Consequence, that there is no such Thing as Duty, or Obligation; so that, to use his own Expression, *the very Supposition he goes upon in asserting any Law of Nature runs directly Counter to his Principles*, that Nothing is fit and right in it self.

In the same Manner to
 Supp. P. 13. N. 2. suppose, that God's Wisdom, and Goodness makes him command Justice, and Gratitude rather than

^a Clem. Alexandrin. p. 369 Edit. Potter
 Cumb. p. 223, 4, 5.

^b See
^c Cumberland, p. 406.
 their

their Contraries ; is to suppose that his Wisdom sees greater Excellence, and Goodness in the Exercise of those Virtues, than in the opposite Vices ; otherwise Wisdom would not direct him to choose one before the other : And if there is this natural Excellence, and Fitness in them, that gains the divine Approbation ; the same ought to make all other rational Beings, Men among the rest, to approve, and practise them, abstractedly from the Consideration, that they are commanded by God ; since to be just, and grateful, not for Temporal Ends only, but from an internal Sense, and Approbation of the Rectitude, and general Beneficialness of such Actions, from a generous Sentiment of Love towards our Benefactors^d, and Benevolence to all Men, is *neither foolish, nor mercenary*, but has Motives enough to support it, as has been shewn, and is true practicable Virtue ; whereas on any other Supposition it has nothing to subsist on, since it is impossible *to prove God to be God*, but by allowing that there is something Right in itself, which his incorrupt Reason must see, assent to, and approve of as it is.

The Gentleman's Letter of four
 Supp. P. 14. Years Date is not now to be found ;
 and therefore I have nothing to say
 to his visionary Notions of Morality ; only as
 our Author thinks the Passage so *ingenious* ; I
 should be glad if he would tell us where the *In-*
genuity, or even Sense of that Expression lies in
 which he says, that *Morality*, with God at the
 Head of it, *would be like a compleat human Body,*
beautifully formed, and fitly disposed for exerting all

^d Cumberland, p. 333.

the Acts, and Offices, that a living Body is capable of: what Similitude does this System of Morality bear to a compleat humane Body? What other Parts of this Morality resemble the other Parts of an organized Body? What Acts and Offices does Morality exert that a living Body is capable of? What is the Meaning of all this Figure, and Ingenuity in plain English?

But suppose the Divinity Supp. p. 15. N. 3. is taken into the System of Morality, how will it, according to his Account of it, be able even thus to exert all the Acts and Offices a living Body is capable of, be they what they will? His Principle is, that every Man is to act only with a View to his own Happiness; it is folly to do otherwise; disadvantageous Virtue therefore, he says, cannot be obligatory itself, since it destroys that Happiness, that is the Principle of Obligation; but it then commences only Duty and practicable, when God commands it, because he thereby secures us of a Compensation. Let us see then how this regular System of Morality is disposed to exert all the Acts and Offices of a living Body. And first I would observe, that it has been before shewn, that since Obligation to Duty is in proportion to Certainty of Reward; the Heathens who had Hopes of a future Reward, not certain enough to be depended upon, nor clear enough to be of any great Use, were not under a certain, and clear Obligation to any disadvantageous Virtue; and therefore this compleat Body of Morality would not put the Heathens upon exerting one Act of Virtue, that was any way disadvantageous to them at present.

^e Supplement, p. 8.

^f Ibid. p. 9.

2. If every Man is therefore obliged to do a thing, because God commands it, and thereby ensures him of a Reward; then whatever God commands with Promise of Reward, a Man will be obliged to do, though *it should be inconsistent with publick Good*; but a Man would not be obliged to obey God, if he could be supposed capable of commanding any thing contrary to general Good^g, (though it would not follow from such a Command, that God is not to be trusted, that he is not faithful, and true to his Promises:) Therefore this compleat System of Morality, will enable Men to do Actions contrary to general Happiness, unless something is supposed to be right in itself to limit both the Command of God, and the Obedience of Men.

3. If out of *this very rational Principle of Self-Happiness* only we are to obey God's Commands; then it would not be our Duty to obey him, *should he command us to submit to Death, and Sufferings without any Reward*; But, says the Remarker^h, *no Creature could decline to do this without Sin*; and if so, God is to be obeyed even when he commands things contrary to our own private Happiness; and therefore this very rational Principle of Self-Happiness is not a sufficient Foundation of Obligation; and the System of Morality built upon it, is capable of exerting Acts contrary to God's just Authority over his Creatures.

4. (To come to the Objection he here considers) for every Man to act thus only for his own Happiness, is not *rational*, but *appetite, and mercenary*; and therefore *it is the very Business of Morality to temper, and govern this Principle, this*

^g Supplement, p. 13.

^h Remarks, p. 75.

Desire of Self-happiness, by a Regard to publick Goodⁱ. It is far more rational to think our selves concerned in all human Offices towards others^k; and so to pursue our own Happiness not simply, separately, or by any means, but as his own Quotation out of Mr. Wollaston expresses it^l, By the Practice of Reason, and Truth. This common Good of all, Reason shews us to be the greatest Good in a self-evident Manner^m. This the Judgement, or Conscience of the Mind makes a Law to usⁿ. For since there is in Man such a noble Faculty, by which he can consider, and comprehend this greatest, and most consistent Good of all rational Beings, the Reader will easily judge, whether the greatest Happiness of every one does not consist in the constant Vigour, and Exercise of that Faculty^o. Accordingly in many Instances not only Men^p but Animals^q, equally regard the Good of others, as they do their own. This then is another Foundation of Virtue, (which he challenges us to shew) that is not fanciful, and chimerical, but real, rational, and practicable. This is following Virtue for general Happiness sake, if our Author will have it so, or for its own sake, which is the same thing; since it is not so much the Means, that leads us to Happiness, as a different thing, as the constituent of it, which makes up that Happiness, that Morality is to direct us^r, and will procure us Happiness in, and from other rational Beings, as has been shewn. This is delighting in true Beauty, and Order, loving

ⁱ Cumberland, p. 258.

^k Tully de leg. p. 11.

Cumberland, p. 44, 204, 211. Justin Martyr, p. 343. Aristot. ad Nicom. L. 8. c. 1. Chrysostom. ad Rom. Hom. 31.

^l Supplement, p. 10.

^m Cumberland p. 75, 76, 187.

ⁿ Cumberland, p. 94.

^o Cumberland, p. 81.

^p Cumberland, p. 116.

^q Tully de Fin. p. 19. Porphy. de non Esu. Animal 3.

^r Cumberland, p. 785.

Things that are truly amiable, setting aside the Consideration of our own Advantageⁱ, and is indulging such a Passion, as is the Excellence, and Happiness of God himself^j; it is desiring the well-grounded Esteem of all other rational Beings, which is a laudable Passion^k, and is the same as delighting in God, who is the το δίδω, or ought itself^l; leads us to love him^m, nay is inseparable from his love; for he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?

If then God's Command does not
 Supp. p. 17. *constitute Duty, and Virtue in moral Matters, as has been fully proved; but their Obligation arises from the Reasons of Things, which the Judgement of a Man's Mind will determine him to obeyⁿ; then positive Duties, that are made so by God's Command only, (or rather by the moral Law enforcing them, when God commands them) that are indifferent in their own Nature, are Actions selected out of others, that are equally good (as Persons, Days, or Things, that are consecrated to a holy Use, are^o) to be Instruments, and Helps to Religion^p; have not the same Ground of Obligation as moral; or to speak intelligibly, both do not oblige us for the same Reason; Moral are indispensably right, and necessary to be done; Positive are never necessary in their own Nature, but useful and prudential in order to Moral; and therefore these indifferent positively commanded*

ⁱ Cumberland, Prolegom. S. 21.
 Prolegom. S. 7. Tully de Fin. p. 192.
 Prol. S. 10.

^x Cumberland, p. 210.
 p. 324, 373.

^z Justin Martyr, p. 182.
 berland, p. 407, 8, 333, &c.

^t Cumberland,
^u Cumberland,
 Cudworth's Intell. System. p. 888.

^y Cumberland. p. 182. N. 4.

^a Cum-

Actions must be so enjoined as to be consistent with Moral, and give way to them whenever they interfere^b: Be therefore first reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift. Nay should we grant, that all Obligation, the Obligation both of moral, and positive Duties arises only from the Will and Command of God; yet since he allows that God's Reasons for commanding Moral, are, or may be different from his Reasons for commanding Positive, it will undeniably follow, that the Subjects of this Law, or Command, ought to obey it in the same Manner, and according to the Force of the Reasons for which it was given. For the Nature of every Law must be judged of by the End for which it was made, and by the Aptness of the things prescribed to promote that End^c. If therefore God lays the greatest Stress where there are the greatest Reasons^d; we may be sure that he does, and we ought to, lay the greatest Stress on moral Duties, which are right in themselves, are necessary for the Good of the whole, (on which account we naturally conclude they are commanded by God) and that they are always to be preferred to Positive, which have no natural Relation to this End, (so that they cannot by natural Reasoning be found to be God's Command:) Nay are of no further use, but as conducive to Moral, (which both Plato, and Cumberland say, ought to be the Design of all other Laws^e) which were added, says Hooker, because of Transgression, to help Nature depraved to a right End^f. We may be sure that moral Duties

^b Cumberland, p. 355, 387. Prolegom. S. 24.

^c Hooker's Ecclesiastical Policy, p. 143.

^d Nat, &c.

Christ. Sacr. p. 17.

^e Plato de leg. p. 631. 633.

Cumberland, p. 384.

^f Hooker's Eccles. Pol. p. 85, 95.

Puffend. Law of Nat p. 21, 122. Justin Martyr, p. 174, 192.

are God's first Intention, Positive only his second, as subservient to a moral Use, and on that Account only commanded by him, as much as the Israelites forty Years Journey through the Wilderness was, says Maimonides^z: And therefore as our Saviour has determined of Fasting, not to be imposed, or practised, when they will be a Hindrance to what is better^h.

These are the good and wise Reasons, on which both the Defence and the other Gentleman maintain positive Duties are founded, Reasons of Prudence, Expediency, and Usefulness, to be Schoolmasters to bring us to moral Virtue, by the moral Use we make of themⁱ; so that on moral Duties hang all the Law, and the Prophets^k. To say they were commanded for any other Reasons, will involve us in many Absurdities, as Justin Martyr has proved^l. How then are these the same in the main with the Reasons of Moral Duties? Moral are right in themselves, and necessary to common Good; Positive are useful, (and so are all the wise Constitutions of good Governments) as promoting Moral; what Degree of Sameness then does that word in the main express? Can two things be more different in the main than these are? And if there is this Difference betwixt them, as there certainly is, it is certain that the divine Love, which (our Author says, commands every thing for the Good of Mankind) commands that principally that is chiefly for their good, and therefore moral Duty preferably to positive.

^z Maimon. more nevochim. Buxtorf. Translat. p. 417. c. 27. p. 433, 436. c. 32. p. 3.

ⁱ Justin Martyr, p. 164, 174, 192, 181, 340. 40. vii. 12.

^h Matt. ix. 17.

^k Matt. xxii.

^l Page 183, 195.

Turn it which way he will, the same Conclusion will still come out ; let it be, as he says, *an eternal Rule of Morality to obey God in Matters of a positive Nature*, and so it is to obey the Laws of the Civil Magistrate ; yet it will not follow from hence, that the Laws of the Civil Magistrate are founded on the same Reasons as the Laws of Nature ^m, or that we are to obey these Civil Laws, before Moral ; neither God, or the Civil Magistrate intended, as has been shewn, we should break the Law of Nature, or neglect it, to execute their positive Appointments ; the Command is of no force in such a Case ; and therefore it is no Disobedience to it, no Impiety against God, not to observe a positive Law, in such Circumstances, as it was never intended to take place, in preference to a moral Duty. So that on all Suppositions it is a just and true Rule that *we should not on any pretence withhold Good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the Power of our Hand to do it. God who appointed the Sabbath or Sacrament, hath appointed the same Method at that time as well as others of governing the World, as Justin Martyr speaks* ⁿ.

Our Author next dislikes the N. III. p. 20. Doctrine in the (Exposition he means of the) Catechism, which he never found there (as has been fully proved, whatever hinders him from owning it) that positive Duties must give way to Moral whenever they interfere. Dr. *Clarke* never meant to put any such Case ^o ; if therefore this Opposition of

^m Selden de J. N. & G. p. 150.
p 194, 195,
41.

ⁿ Justin Martyr,
^o Compar. Excell. hom p. 33. to

Duty to Duty is so injurious to both, it ill suits with the Honour some Men profess for Religion, to have made such an injurious Comparison between the Duties of it without Reason. But to examine particularly why he dislikes this Doctrine ; One Reason given among others for the constant Preference of Moral to Positive Duties, was that Moral were unchangeable, Positive not : Our Author does not dispute the Consequence, but only the Immutability of the Law of Nature ; *some moral Duties*, he says, *will cease*, *Mercy to the afflicted*, for instance : Will then that Principle of Love, and Benevolence, from whence this Mercy proceeds, ever cease ? Shall we not be always *merciful as God is merciful*, to all that shall be Objects of Mercy ? Will a Sense, and Love of what is right, with the Affections of Purity and Holiness, a Disposition to give every one his due, *which ought to be in a Man, though he lived alone*^p, will these ever be *taken from us* ? The Scripture assures us of the direct contrary^q ; and Moralists are wont to excite Men to acquire these Dispositions, because they cannot be happy without them in any State, for *the Kingdom of God is within us*^r. And are they after all to cease hereafter ? No surely, they are the Approbation and Love of Goodness, and therefore as permanent as *the Love of God*, who is Goodness itself. The particular Acts indeed, and Expressions of these Dispositions, may cease with the present System of things, and so may the particular Acts of the Love of God ; but it will not from hence follow, that those moral Acts that will cease, ought not to be preferred before Po-

^p Cumberland, p. 66.
^r Luke xvii. 21.

^q 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

sitive that will cease too. If any Consequence is to be drawn from these Acts Ceasing, it is that neither moral, or positive Acts are to be regarded, since they will both cease hereafter, and therefore why should we exercise our selves in them at present? If it be said, because they are for the Good of the present World, and tend to qualify us for a State of Happiness hereafter; then it will follow, that for the same Reason those ought to be principally regarded, that principally answer these Ends; and therefore Moral Duty ought to be preferred to Positive.

Accordingly there are Instances in
 P. 21. Scripture of our Saviour's Healing Infirmities of long standing, and which might have staid longer, (as the Question proposed by the Ruler of the Synagogue, *Are there not six Days in which Men ought not to work* ^f, &c. plainly supposes,) without imminent Danger, no the Sabbath Day ^g, when the *Jews* had a mind to try him in this very particular; which he justifies by this general Rule, *that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath Day*. The same Exception was admitted in eating Swine's Flesh, wherever our Author learnt the contrary. They were not indeed allowed to eat it in order to avoid *Persecution*, which was *Eleazar's Case* ^h, because this would be obeying Man rather than God; but *in case of Sicknes* they were allowed to eat any thing forbidden, as *Selden* shews at large ^w. So contrary is the Truth of the Case to our Author's Account of it.

^f Luke xiii. 14.

^g John v. 8. Mark iii. 1. 2.

3, 4.

^h 2 Macchab. vi. 18, &c.

^w Selden de

J.N. & G. L. 2. c. 10. p. 257, 258.

P. 22. But

But further, to answer the Supposition he makes about *Abraham*, suppose P. 22. *Abraham*, when he was commanded to walk through the Land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it ^x, before he had finished his Journey ^y, had turned aside to rescue *Lot* from his Enemies, or intercede for *Sodom* ^z, would this be justifiable Conduct? I suppose it was. Nay suppose in his Journey to offer up *Isaac*, he had found a Person, as the Samaritan did, that had been dangerously wounded, and destitute of Assistance; would it have been a Crime in him to have staid till he had taken care of him? I suppose, I am sure not, since our Saviour, by not mentioning any slight Cause, for which the Priest, and Levite unjustly neglected him ^a, absolutely condemns them, whatever their Reason was; and thereby plainly supposes no Reason could justify the Breach of this moral Duty.

And if any Person had just Occasion to take a Journey, though it was not unavoidable, so that he could not be at *Jerusalem* at the Time of the Passover, God was pleased to appoint another Time for his observing it ^b; and accordingly *Hezekiah* deferred the Time of keeping it, by the Advice of his Counsellors, for the whole Nation in general ^c upon good Reasons. *Maimonides* has well explained the Truth of the Case, *These Positive Precepts, as they are given, and suited to the Nation in common, have no regard to extraordinary Cases; they therefore set a particular Time to Services of the second Intention, but not to those of*

^x Genesis xiii. 17. ^y Genesis xx. 1. ^z Genesis, xiv. 14. &c. Genesis xviii. 23. ^a Luke x. 31, 32.
^b Exodus xii. 18, 19. Numbers ix. 11, 12. ^c 2 Chronicles xxx. 5.

the first, which are absolute, and universal^d. Not that these Positive Duties are to be done at all Events at the Time fixed for them; but the Reason of appointing a Time for their Performance was, because it was proper and necessary to fix things of such a Nature to a certain Time, when they would be the best Memorials of the Things designed to be represented, and excited by them; otherwise they would be in great Danger of being quite neglected, since there would not any natural Occasions of doing them happen, as there does constantly of doing Moral Duties.

There is another Gentleman^e, Supp. p. 23. whom our Author's general Way of Writing, obliged to be *more tedious* than he could have wished, in proving the Excellence, and Obligation of Moral Duties above Positive. The first Nine or Ten Pages are spent in justifying Dr. Clarke's Account of the Sacrament, which, as it was represented by this Author, was made the Foundation of the Dispute; and therefore are not, I think, much foreign to the purpose, since they have vindicated the Doctor's Sense so undeniably, that no attempt has been made to answer it.

How far this Writer has injured our Author, by representing his Notions as differing from Bishop Cumberland's^f, appears in some measure from the wonderful Harmony that has been already shewn to be betwixt them; and will appear more evidently if we compare their fundamental Principles of Morality together. *The chief Crinomenon*

^d Maimonides More Nevoch. p. 439. l. 33. p. 3.

^e Comparative Excellence, &c. of Moral and Positive Duties.

^f Compar. Excell. &c. p. 44.

of the Law of Nature, says the Bishop, is to be shewn from the necessary Connection of the Actions of any Person to the publick Good, and his own greatest Happiness, and Perfection^e. Bishop Cumberland therefore does not found our Duty, upon what is best upon the whole only in any particular Case, as this Author does, but upon what is necessarily best, *what has a natural necessary Connection with general Good*; which is a very material Difference, and will produce great Alteration in our Duty. For there may be things that may be for the Good of the whole in a particular Case, which it shall not be our Duty to do, because it has not a natural and necessary Connection with it. *Justin Martyr* has given us an Example of this kind: It was for the Good of the whole, as Circumstances were, that our Saviour should be crucified, at that particular Time, and Manner, that he was; and yet it was not a Duty, but a Crime in his Betrayal, and Murderers^h. For this was not naturally, and in itself for the Good of the whole, but arose from the Embarrassment of Affairs; and yet our Author's Rule that is *so innocent, and of such admirable use*, will fully justify them for acting thus for the good of the whole in these particular Circumstances, so as not to cross God's main Design, the common Felicity. Well therefore might *Socrates* curse those, that thus separate the *Usefulness of Actions from their Honesty*ⁱ, which will justify the worst of Wickedness in many other Instances, as well as this, had I time to produce and explain them^k. But I shall only ask him at present, whether it could be for the

^e Cumberland, p. 207.

Sherlock on Providence, p. 222. 4th Edit.

de leg. p. 41.

^h Justin Martyr, p. 346.

ⁱ Tully

^k See Comp. Excell. p. 46, 7, 8.

Good of the whole for a Man to neglect to do the greatest Service to Mankind in general, rather than totally omit a single Positive Duty? How is this best upon the whole? Or if it is not, by what Rule is it declared to be right? And where lies the admirable Use of that Rule that will warrant him to do so.

Add but the Pages 45, 50, 51
Supp. p. 24. of the Comparative Excellence, to Pages 46, 47, 48, quoted by this Author; nay add but the Pages 27, 28, of the Supplement itself, to the Page 24, which we are now considering; and it will appear flagrant, that both the Disadvantages which this Author had said would attend the Neglect of the Sacrament, both *the spiritual Disadvantage it would be of to our own Souls, and the Offence it might give the World*, were considered particularly in Comparative Excellence; and it was there proved that neither of these Disadvantages could follow from neglecting the Sacrament to do Moral Duties, when they were wanted. *Non privatio, sed Contemptus Sacramenti, damnat*, says St. Austin; and if Men should unjustly be scandalized at such a Neglect, sure a serious Man may venture to affirm, that the greatest Services to Mankind will compensate for such an Offence; nay, so little a Service, as healing one sick Person on the Sabbath-Day, otherwise our Saviour would not have done it, to the great Scandal of the Chief of the Jews.

And here I cannot help observing in Justice to his injured Adversary, this Author's peculiar Skill, and Dexterity, in Controversy, to say nothing worse of it: He can charge it in his 24th Page,

¹ Nat. &c. Christian Sacr. p. 26.

as an Article of *Misrepresentation* upon the Author of *Comparative Excellence*, that he had not taken notice of the *Spiritual Disadvantage*, which he had said would arise from the Neglect of the Sacrament to do Moral Duties, but had considered the Offence only it would give to others; and *had misrepresented him as resolving all the Sin of such a Neglect into that only*; and yet in his 27th and 28th Pages, as if all this had been forgot, he can object at large against the Answer, which *Comparative Excellence* had given to his Account of these *Spiritual Disadvantages*; so that within the Compass of three Pages in the Supplement, the Author of *Comparative Excellence* has taken no notice of the *Spiritual Disadvantages* ascribed to the Neglect of the Sacrament, and yet has given a false, and insufficient Account of them. This is his way of proving his Adversaries guilty of *Misrepresentation*.

It is an odd way of arguing in
 Supp. p. 25. this Author's Opinion, to say that
if it is right, as he owns it is, to neglect Positive to do Moral Duties once, it will be right to do it always in the same Circumstances: For 1st, he says, there is a *Time for all things*, and therefore bare Repetition of the same right Act may make it out of Time, and thereby criminal. What therefore is it that determines the Times of Things, the *Time to weep, and the Time to laugh, the Time to plant, and the Time to pluck up*? How shall a wise Man's Heart determine both *Time, and Judgement*? How shall we fix this subtle Point of Duration, when every thing may properly be done? Is this to be settled by Tale, and Number, or by the Circumstances, and Condition of Things? If by Number, how many
 Times

Times precisely may the same right not be' done, before it will be criminal? If the Time of Things is to be adjusted only by Circumstances, then the same Circumstances that made it the Time to do Moral Duties once, will, when they return, make it the Time to do Moral Duties always, and therefore to prefer them to Positive. — *The Nonsense*, whatever it is, of supposing Moral and Positive Duties to interfere, is chargeable only on those that first raised the Dispute without Reason, and by their dangerous Doctrines made it necessary to reply. But,

2dly, *It is great Vanity*, he says, in any Man to pretend that his (Moral) Services are equivalent to God's Honour; therefore Positive Duties ought sometimes to be preferred to Moral, which most promote God's Honour, says Bishop Cumberland, by an Imitation of the divine Beneficence^m, and by making Thanksgiving redound to the Glory of God; we ought rather to chuse to Honour him with our Lips, than Honour the Lord, and relieve our Brethren with our Substance.

3dly, *There is no Man*, he says, but what spends every Day more time in eating, drinking, and sleeping, than it would require to receive the Sacrament, and therefore he argues, that if Moral Duties yield to these, when necessary, (and therefore Moral Duties themselvesⁿ) therefore they ought to yield to Positive; or if these Refreshments are not supposed to be necessary, Moral Duties if wanted ought not to yield to them; neither is it sufficient to say, when our Neighbour wants, and desires our Assistance, *trouble me not, the Door is now shut, and my Children are with me in Bed, I cannot rise and give it thee* o.

^m Cumberland. p. 194. Rom. ii. 24. D. Hieron. in locum. John xv. 8.

ⁿ Cumb. p. 368.

^o Luke xi. 7.

4thly, *To say that barely repeating the same innocent Act in the same Circumstances does not make it criminal, is, he says, false and contrary to the Rules of Moral Arithmetick; for by that (whatever sort of Mathematical Magick it is, or however to be distinguished from Positive Arithmetick) adding several things many times together, shall create a Property in the Sum, that is not in any of the Particulars. (This perhaps, if we could but know where to learn it, would teach us by adding several Mathematical Surfaces together to produce a Solid.) For Instance, to eat, and drink when Hungry, and Thirsty, is right to refresh Nature; why then eat and drink again when Hungry and Thirsty? What is it? Redit uncia, Quid Fit?*

Eating and drinking indeed, when not Hungry, or Thirsty, when Circumstances are changed, to overwhelm, not refresh Nature, is wrong; but this is repeating the same natural Act only, which by change of Circumstances will be made criminal, and not the same Moral Act under the same Circumstances, which, if once, will eternally be right ^p. So again, *to fast to mortify the Body is right, to fast so as to pine it, when it does not want Mortification, (the same Circumstances these I suppose) is wrong. While a Man is exercising Charity towards other Men's Souls, or Bodies, he is, according to this Author, neglecting the Concerns of his own Soul, though he is improving it in that Virtue, that is more durable than Faith, or Hope, that is the End of the Commandment.* God allows us therefore by Numbers of Times, I suppose, and not by the Circum-

^p Cumberland, p. 86. Vera propositio — cum aliis veris convenit, — licet similis ille Casus alio tempore recurrat.

stances of Things, to prefer one Duty to another ; we may neglect his Positive Ordinances to do Moral Duty to seven times, but not to seventy times seven. So exact is the Scripture in telling us how often we shall repeat the same good Act in the same Circumstances, for fear we should be righteous over-much. It is gross *Robbery and Sacrilege to take a Talent from God's Positive Ordinances* to do our Neighbour Service ; though it would be wrong *not to take one Shekel* on the same Account, says our Author's Moral Arithmetick ; but *how can each failure, says Puffendorff, taken collectively, escape the Imputation of Guilt, when at the same time each particular is acknowledged to be sinful ?*

We are now come to the
 Supp. p. 27. N. 1. Proof, that Comparative Excellence brings, that greater Spiritual Advantage arises to our selves from Moral, than does from Positive Duties, in Opposition to what this Author has said to the contrary. Here then it is admitted that the Spiritual Advantages attending both are there at large considered, however it came before to be denied ; and only some parts of the Account are objected to. Particularly it was said, that Moral Duties are more excellent, and of greater Spiritual Advantage to us than Positive, *as much as Practice improves, and strengthens good Dispositions in us beyond Contemplation, &c. as if, says this Author, Acts of Positive Duty were Contemplation only.* Yes, Sir, though they are *Acts* in *Italick* Characters, yet (setting aside the supernatural Assistance attending them, which we have equal Reason to expect in the Practice of Moral

^a Puffendorff, L. N. p. 49. B. 1. ch. v. S. 8.

Duties^r, so that they are in this respect equal) they are such *Acts* as are designed to excite Contemplation only of things done for us, and Duties to be done by us, and Affections suitable to both ; as *Maimonides*, and *Dr. Spencer* have shewn of the whole *Jewish Service* ; and *Justin Martyr* proves both of the *Jewish Rites* and *Christian Sacraments*^t, they are therefore *to be fulfilled in the Kingdom of Heaven*, where Symbols and Representations will be superseded by Vision, and Enjoyment. But they are useful at present, because *the Faith and Hope of Christians is wonderfully strengthened by the Contemplation of the great Propitiation for Sin, made by our Saviour, and represented to their Eyes on the Lord's Table in the Holy Communion*^v. *Human Weakness requires to be assisted by these external Signs*^w ; neither is God himself worshipped in these Ordinances with Clouds of Incense, but with the Contemplations of pure Minds^x.

2. It was further said, to shew the greater Spiritual Benefit of Moral above Positive Duties, that *It was peculiar to Moral Duty which Positive has no share in, that it made us rich towards God, rich in good Works*. For though indeed *St. James* says, that *Abraham was justified by Works, when he offered up Isaac his Son*, as it was positively commanded him ; yet the Place in *Genesis*^y that he alludes to, and the Account given of *Abraham* in the other Places of the New Testament, shew that he was justified by his Faith, by his

^r John xv. 1, 2. John xiv. 23. Luke xvi. 9, 11. Goodman's Wint. Ev. Conf. p. 154. Bishop Burnet's Expos. Ar. 12. p. 130.

^t Justin Martyr, p. 184. 5, 172, 3, 185, 230, 218, 219, 290, 222, 3.

^u Goodman's Wint. Ev. Conf. p. 162.

^w Maierus Hieroglyph. Egypt. L. 4. p. 164.

Goodman's Wint. Ev. Conf. p. 186.

^v Matt. xxvi. 29.

^y Genesis xvi. 5, 6.

believing God's Promise *that his Seed should increase, as the Stars of Heaven*. This was reckoned to him for Righteousness, and it was certainly his Moral Duty firmly to believe what God had revealed; but how was it reckoned, *when he was in Circumcision, or in Uncircumcision*², as the Apostle to the *Romans* Reasons, after he had offered up his Son, or before? Long before he was born, as the Text in *Genesis* assures us. I argue then, as the Apostle does of Circumcision, that since *Abraham* was thus justified before he had offered his Son, this positively commanded Act was not the Cause of his antecedent Justification; but the Sincerity, and Strength of his Faith only; and as he received Circumcision from God *as a Seal of the Righteousness of the Faith that he had*, on God's Part; so he received the positive Command to sacrifice his Son, not as a new Cause of Justification, but as a Proof, and Testimony of the Sincerity of this justifying Faith on his: If this Faith was sincere, it would necessarily lead him to do every thing which God commanded, in whom he trusted; and this is the Use St. *James* makes of his Example, to shew the Nature, and Effects of a true justifying Faith, and not, contrary to the other Scriptures, that these Acts of his were the Cause of his Justification. And accordingly, as by readily offering his Son, he shewed his Faith was constant and sincere; the same Blessing was renewed to his Faith thus proved by a positive Act³, as was before given it before any positive Act was done in Confirmation of it; so that the positive Act did not increase his Reward, or make him *rich towards God*. And though

² Rom. iv. 3. Galat. iii. 6, 20. Heb. xi. 18, 19. ³ Genesis xxii. 16, 17, 18.

keeping the Faith, adhering to, practising, and maintaining, and suffering for the Truth, will entitle to a Crown of Righteousness, all eminent Acts of Moral Virtue; yet preaching, or prophesying in Christ's Name only will avail nothing^b, as himself has assured us; or at least is no more rewardable, than as it is a faithful Discharge of an Office, or Station of Life God has put us in, after which appointment, the secondary Law of Nature makes it a Moral Duty; and the Reward, which the Apostle himself expected, *was not to him only, but to all them also that love Christ's appearing*^c.

3. His next Objection, after he has passed over many material Articles of preference ascribed to Moral Duties in Comparative Excellence, is against a single Epithet, which was given to Moral Duty in Consequence of what had been before proved of it, and therefore it is no wonder, that it should be, as he says, *something over again*; of such Repetitions no Author need be ashamed: How far it is consistent with the Gravity, and Ingenuity of a serious Disputant, to charge Epithets as Repetitions of Things, and consider them as distinct Arguments, while he takes no notice of those that are stated at length, I leave to himself, and the Reader to consider. But the Objection is, that Moral Duties are said to be *active Virtue*, as if, says he, Positive were not altogether as *active*: No, Sir, Positive Duties, though they are Actions, serve, and were designed to help *Contemplation* only, as has been shewn; and are not virtuous Dispositions exerting themselves in their proper genuine *Acts*, they are not

^b Matt. vii. 22, 24.

^c 2 Tim. iv. 8.

as *Justin Martyr* says of Circumcision, ἔργον δικαιοσύνης^d, Works of Righteousness; or as the Apostle, *the Work of the Law*, which was written in the Hearts of the Gentiles.

4. His 4th Objection taken from a Similitude, (and therefore no wonder that it is a Repetition of the Thought it was intended to illustrate, though notwithstanding the Repetition one would have thought it might have pleased this Author, as he so much admired the Allegory in the Gentleman's Letter, which we before considered) is, that it is improperly said, that in *Moral Duties we step forward towards Heaven*; in *Positive we sit down, as it were, to consider, and refresh our selves for the Journey*. So *Abraham*, says he, *we are to suppose sat down to refresh, when he took a Journey out of his own Country*. Idle and ridiculous! *Abraham*, as has been shewn, was as much justified before he did this positive Act, as afterwards; this did not increase the Blessing, or Righteousness imputed to him; but the Exercise of this Faith in this positive Act strengthened, and confirmed it. And thus do all Positive Duties contribute, to refresh, and confirm good Dispositions in us, on which Account they are often called by the ancient Fathers ἐφόδια viatica, or Provisions for our Journey^e exactly agreeable to the Similitude here used; for by them, as *Grotius* somewhere speaks, *we have as it were Wind, and Tide given us, to steer our Spiritual Course*.

5. In his 5th Objection, which he fetches from the Beginning of another Paragraph, and a dif-

^d Justin Martyr, 184. Thirlb. Edit. τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι τὸ θεῶν γένος τὴν σαρκικὴν Περιτομὴν λαμβάνειν δείκνυσιν, ὅτι εἰς σημεῖον ἢ Περιτομὴ αὐτῇ δεδομένη, ἀλλ' ὅσα αἰς ἔργον δικαιοσύνης.

^e Bingham. B. xi. C. 1. S. 10. B. 15. C. 9. S. 4. B. 18. C. 4. S. 3. B. 19. C. 1. S. 3.

ferent Argument. He is displeased *that Moral Duties are said to be founded on the Reasons and Fitnesses of Things*, which Positive were not, but on prudential Reasons only sufficient to justify God's Wisdom in commanding them as a wise Governour, as has been fully shewn; and this he himself plainly allows, if he has any meaning in his Words, though he has so soon forgot it. For when he supposes it to be asked him, *Whether Positive Duties are natural, necessary, eternal, indispensable, resulting from the Nature of Things*; He answers, *No*; for then the Precepts enjoining them would not be *Positive but Moral*^f. And yet this Position of his own is here, to make an appearance of Numbers, made an Article of Objection against his Adversary.

In his next Paragraph he pre-
 Supp. p. 28. tends to give a different Reason from what was assigned in Comparative Excellence, *Why negative Moral Precepts bind always*, so that no affirmative Moral or Positive Duty can be done in Violation of them, whereas affirmative Moral Duties do not oblige in the same strict, and constant Manner; his Reason is, *That we cannot be employed in all affirmative Duties always, because they are many, and we can do but one thing at a Time, but we can always forbear doing what God has forbidden*: And this indeed is a good Reason, why we should not be obliged to do two or three Moral affirmative Duties at the same time, we may not be able to do them, and therefore cannot be obliged to Impossibilities. But we are able, and have a Power to do an affirmative Moral Duty, or a Positive

^f Supplement, p. 19.

Duty, so, as to violate a negative moral Law; we may have a natural Power to do this, why then shall we not have a moral Power? Our Author's Reason ceases, we may be able to relieve a Person in distress out of that which is not our own, what then hinders us, lays a moral Restraint upon us not to use this natural Power we have in this way? What makes the negative Duty bind, and not the affirmative? No other, but *the crude Reason* that Comparative Excellence has given; that by a negative Moral Duties interfering thus with an affirmative, an evil Circumstance is added to the otherwise good Action, that makes it sinful, and unlawful for us to relieve and assist one, (which would be otherwise a good Act) by violating the Rights of another; and therefore the Obligation to such a Charity ceases, till this evil Circumstance is removed. As *Crude an Account* as this is, it is what the best Judges in these Matters have left us^g, and the only one that will answer the Difficulty which his Solution does not reach.

This is the *Specimen* our Author has given us of his own as well as his Adversary's Skill in these Matters; and I dare say, his Adversary is as desirous as himself, that the indifferent Reader should, as he proposes, from hence judge, which are the greatest Trifles, the Arguments that had been brought against him, or the Answers he has given them; and what he would have been able to have done, had he entered seriously into the whole Course of Argument in a Book, which he

^g Petrus Gregorius Syntag. Jur. univ. L xi. c. 1. S. 8. mutabile erit — jus Naturæ, quando rationes, quæ æquum statuiebant, aliis subortis Causis novis Incipiunt minui, & superantur aliâ majori æquitate.

has picked and culled for Objections with so little Success; and which he is forced at last to condemn in the Lump, by vilifying and reproachful Language, instead of serious Arguments.

It remains that I consider, as I proposed, wherein Bishop Cumberland's Scheme of Morality, as far as it denies the Reasons of Things to be in themselves obligatory, is defective; and what Difficulties it labours under on that Account.

That Bishop Cumberland did not see any thing wrong, or dangerous in supposing that something was fit, and obligatory in itself, as, he says, *the Generality of Moralists before him maintained*^b appears from some Parts of his Book in which he mentions this Notion, without raising the least Objection against itⁱ; and from others, in which he seems to reason from this very Supposition, that something must necessarily appear right in itself to us, and therefore to God himself, who has right Reason in common with us^k. But because his Adversary would not allow this Synthetical Way of proving the divine Attributes^k; and Hobbes had maintained that the mere Dictates of Reason had not the proper Nature of Laws^l; and therefore that there were none but Civil Laws, by which Men were obliged; *He thought it necessary, especially at that time, as he speaks himself*^m, to shew, that they were really Laws enacted by God, that they were *Ευρημα τῆς δυνάμεως Θεοῦ, in the same Manner as Axioms in Theory (that the Radii of the same Circle are equal, &c.) were, because he had given us a Power of discovering the Truth of both alike*ⁿ. Now as this supposes

^b Cumb. Prolegom. S. 4.
169.

S. 3.

^k Ibid. p. 223.

^m Prolegom. S. 4.

ⁱ Ibid. p. 9, 14, 16, 17.

^l Ibid. p. 16. Prolegom.

ⁿ Cumb. p. 89, 90.

something

something to be true, and right in itself, and therefore obligatory, which our natural Faculties can of themselves discover, and oblige us to do; so without such a Supposition, he gives no Account how we are obliged to obey the Command of God himself. This he says we must be obliged to, *because we cannot but see it necessary for the common Good, that a Sovereignty over us, and a Power of giving us Laws, should belong to so excellent a Being* °; it is therefore our discovering this Fitness, and Necessity of the Authority of God over us that does itself oblige us, or we are under no Obligation to obey his Commands. And yet, however it comes to pass, he afterwards represents these Convictions we have of the Fitnesses of Things (one of which is of God's Authority over us) not as obliging us themselves, but as Indications only that God intended by them to oblige us, and makes all Obligation arise only from his Will^r. Though there must be some obligatory Fitnesses, and Reasons in Things, by which we are bound to obey it, before his Will, or Command can take place.

He further makes the Fitnesses of Things relative to a certain End, our own, and the common Happiness^q, and accordingly defines Good and Evil to be what will promote that End, what is naturally good for Mankind; and moral Good or Evil is according to him doing one, or the other to our selves, and others^r. Whereas moral Good is so far from being so, out of reference to natural Good, that natural Good consists in preserving the Order of Things, acting agreeably to

° Camb. Prolegom. S. 24. p. 343. 345 S. 7. ^p Cumberland, p. 282, 324, 230. ^q Cumberland cap. 3. S. 2.
^r Cumberland, p. 202, 325, 105. S. 7. p. 203.

the Truths that result from them^r, and moral Good-acting alike in like Cases, which Reason directs, is so far from being the Effect, that it is the efficient Cause, and Constituent of that natural Good we are to pursue^r, and is therefore right in itself without reference to any thing else. The Reason why it is naturally Good, and pleasant to us, is because our Understanding pronounces it to be right, *to act alike in like Cases even in things, that are equally effectual to produce the common natural Good*. So that the natural Good of it is not the Cause of its Reasonableness and Morality; but its Reasonableness the Cause of the Pleasure that attends it; and therefore something is fit, and right in itself without relation to any thing else.

Further, if it be the fundamental Principle of Duty that we ought to do what by its natural necessary Effect is best for the common Good^w; if we are on that Account to punish, and bring evil on Offenders, because it is necessary for the common Good^x; for the same Reason we may violate the Rights; and hurt the Persons of the Innocent; nay, we may break the whole negative moral Law, as oft as it will be a Means of a greater Degree of Good to the greater Part of Mankind^y.

Nay, if our Duty be only what will do the greatest Good, then we satisfy this Duty, if we *actually* do those things that are necessary to promote it^z, from whatever Principles we do it; and this Obligation will reach no further than to regu-

^r Cumberland, p. 327, 211.

^r Cumberland, p. 5. 53.

^w Cumberland, p. 212, 213, 214, 277. 281, 283.

Cumberland, p. 42. S. 24.

^x Cumberland, p. 270. S. 39

^y Cumberland, Prolegom. S. 24. p. 227.

^z Cumberland

p. 257.

late our external Behaviour. For what should oblige us to acquire the Dispositions of Benevolence, and Justice, which he says *a solitary Man ought to have*? If it be said, which is all that can be said, that they are necessary to the Peace, and Happiness of our own Minds^a, then, it will follow, that they are naturally agreeable, and of themselves approved of by the Mind, and therefore obligatory in their own Nature without reference to any thing else. Again, Bishop Cumberland says, that we are first excited by the Care of our own Happiness to consider the Causes on which it depends, namely, God and Man; and thereby we are led and obliged to endeavour to secure their Favour by doing good to them^b. In another place he confutes this very Account, and sets himself to prove that doing publick Good is intended and approved of on its own Account, as being most excellent, the best End^c, which God himself must be pleased with^d as well as Man. And yet he again seems to allow^e, that if it was possible for every one to attain Happiness by oppressing and opposing all others, Reason would allow him to do it; but since he cannot attain Happiness this way, therefore Reason teaches him to seek it by the Practice of Justice and Benevolence; the only possible Way of attaining it. From whence it will be difficult to shew how Men are obliged to the Practice of universal Justice, if it is possible for a Majority to secure their own Happiness among themselves by injuring the rest; and much more difficult will it be to prove their Obligation to observe the

^a Cumberland, p. 212, 213.^b Cumberland, p. 290, 292.^c Cumberland, p. 115, 116, 168, 169, 170.^d Cum-

berland. p. 224. 201, 202, 216.

^e Cumberland, p. 217.

Law of Nature, towards those that will not observe it again, and therefore to keep Faith with publick Robbers: unless it is allowed that the intrinsic Reason, and Perfection of their own Minds obliges them to regard the Rights, to propose the general Good of all—to act alike in like Cases; which is admitting something to be reasonable and fit in itself, independent on the good Influence it has upon our selves, or others; otherwise it will be impossible in these Particulars to make out a consistent Scheme of Morality. And it is reasonable to suppose from many Parts of his Book, that Bishop Cumberland intended this as his fundamental Principle; but writing his Book at different Times, and under frequent Interruptions, when he had forgot many things, that he had formerly considered, as he says himself^f, he might not have it always so immediately in view.

^f Cumb. Prolegom. S. 29, 30





APPENDIX.



HERE is another Thing that has lately appeared in this Controversy, under the Title of an *Essay on Moral Obligation*; which in Justice to the Subject I am obliged to take Notice of, though otherwise, in Charity to the Author, I should rather have let it pass unexamined.— It begins with strong Professions of Freedom, and Impartiality to both Sides, proposing only to *determine which of the two different Schemes of Morality that have been offered, is really the true one*.— It proceeds with great Zeal to defend the Doctrine of the Supplement, *that nothing can be fit, and obligatory in itself, but as it is the Will, and Command of God*.— And yet it strongly concludes even by its own Arguments for the direct contrary; and clearly makes out the eternal Obligation of the Reasons of Things, by the very Proofs that were designed against it. As I abhor condemning a Book in this general Manner, purely to raise a Prejudice against it, or its Author, or (as the Custom is) to get clear of the Trouble of answering its Arguments, by

^a Essay, &c. p. 2.

^b Essay, p. 5, 7, 49, 46.

calling it *puerile, empty of Argument, designed to darken the Subject, puzzle the Cause, and perplex the Evidence* ^c; as I take this to be a Method not of puzzling, but suppressing Evidence as far as possible, and of skreening the Ignorance, and corrupt Designs of those, who are never mistaken whatever they write; are never guilty of recanting an Errour though ever so fully proved upon them, or of allowing any thing to be true *αὐτὸ καὶ αἰσέτω τῶν ἰδίων*, as *Aristotle* speaks; I shall make out the Truth of the Charge by a short Representation of the several Contradictions that confute one another throughout the Book; and by shewing the true Consequences that will arise from his own Arguments, in favour of the eternal and natural Obligation of Morality, and the Preference it deserves before any Positive Duty.

To pass over then some Inaccuracies in his very *Introduction*, which I have not time to enlarge upon; as his warranting — *that Mr. Locke has abundantly proved, that Morality is as capable of Demonstration as any other speculative Science* ^d; when himself only says — *He dares venture to say it is*, but has not considered the great Difficulties, which *Aristotle, Grotius, and Bishop Cumberland* ^e have shewn will always hinder us, in every way of considering Morality, from coming to equal Certainty about the several Duties of it, as we can, and do attain in other speculative Sciences relating to Quantity: — His concluding that because Morality is capable of Demonstration, it must therefore be owing to *Prejudice that Men differ* (not about the Duties, but) *about the first Principles of it*, — that they demonstrate it from different

^c Essay, p. 78.

^d Essay, p. 2.

^e Grotius de

J. B. & P. L. 2. c. 23. S. 1. Cumberland, p. 375.

Suppositions ; which I take to be a Consequence, which his Premises, if they were true, will not justify, as, if it was material in the present Dispute, I could easily shew him : But to leave these things at present to his second Consideration ; the first important Contradiction relating to the Matter in Dispute, which deserves to be taken notice of, is in his Account of *Obligation*^f. It is, he says, *a Necessity upon an Agent consistent with perfect Liberty* — and *presupposes arbitrary Will and Choice* : — Not to stay then to convince him, or satisfy the Reader of Things, which no thinking Man can doubt of, — That it is necessary and unavoidable for a Man to chuse according to the Judgement of his Understanding^h ; that otherwise it is impossible there should be any such thing as Obligation, but by Chains and Fettersⁱ ; — That the Freedom of the Agent is not destroyed by any such Necessity, nor by any thing but foreign, external, irresistible Influence^k ; — That notwithstanding this Necessity of Choice, there is sufficient *Merit* in the Agents taking care to examine things thoroughly, to avoid rash, and erroneous Judgements, the sole Causes of wrong Elections,

^f Essay, ch. 1. p. 3.

^g Essay, p. 51.

^h Cumberland, p. 76, 169, 214. Fieri vix potest, ut quæ judicavimus esse bona, ea non velimus.

ⁱ Cumberland, p. 240, 257. Vinculis propriè nonne astringitur Animus. Nihil est quod necessitatem quicquam Faciendi menti humanæ afferre potest, præter propositiones Exhibentes Indicia Boni ex iis quæ faciemus proventuri.

^k Aristot. ad Nicom. L. 5. c. 1. Βίαιον δὲ, ὃ ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐκείνῳ, Cumb. p. 81. Possumus animum divertere a Cogitationibus — in quo libertas Eminent, — Hominis natura hoc in se involvit libertatis, ut ad nihil determinetur, nisi interveni sui judicii.

and Actions¹; — and that God is in this way a proper Subject of Obligation as well as Man^m:— I would only observe, that this Obligation *consistent with perfect Liberty, and presupposing arbitrary Will, and Choice*, arises, as he says afterwardsⁿ, *from a Prospect of obtaining Happiness, and avoiding Misery*. But Page 33, *a Man can never act against his own Happiness but by Mistake*; and Page 51, *a Man cannot do otherwise than love himself, it is impossible he should chuse to be eternally miserable, rather than eternally happy*; therefore he cannot be said to be obliged to love himself, or to chuse Happiness, since it is impossible he should do otherwise, *it is not free though voluntarily in him to do it*; and Obligation cannot be applied to such Cases. Either therefore the Choice of Happiness is not necessary, but arbitrary and free, directly contrary to Page 51, or Obligation *consistent with perfect Liberty* cannot arise from a *Prospect of it*, according to Page 51, a Contradiction in Terms to Page 4; or if Obligation does arise from *such a Prospect*, as Page 4 teaches, it is not a Necessity *consistent with perfect Liberty*, as is said in Page 3; and every way is equally applicable to God as Man, (expressly repugnant to his second and third Chapters, near a fourth Part of his whole Book) since we read in Page 51, *That God's chusing what is good, is not free though voluntary, in the same Manner as Man's*

¹ Cumberland, p. 90. S. x. p. 324. Quicquid contra rerum naturam agimus, &c. id totum præcipiti, temerario, intempestivoq; liberi arbitrii usui, præsentis pierumq; Commodi Titillatione delusi, & stimulantis Animum ad pronuntiandum de rebus nondum salis Compertis, imputandum reor.

^m Cumberland, p. 324. Voluntas ejus (Dei) propter infinitam suam perfectionem, ab intellectus sui dictatis dissentire non potest.

ⁿ Essay, p. 4.

chusing his own Happiness is not. Either therefore neither are obliged by a Prospect of Good; or Happiness; or if one notwithstanding the Necessity of the Choice is obliged by a Prospect of Happiness, the other is for the same Reason, and in the same Manner obliged by a Prospect of Good. To pass on to another Contradiction, — as his *Liberty-Obligation* arose from a *necessary* Choice of Self-Happiness^o, he very consistently says, Page 68 — *That whosoever considers Mankind as he ought, will see that he best consults his own Happiness who studies that of the Publick, and endeavours after the Esteem of Mankind — which is useful and necessary for him as he lives in a social Life^r, and if he has a Sense of this, he must have a constant Disposition to promote the Good of others, that is, he must desire, and approve all Actions, that tend towards it; that is, according to his own Definition of Obligation, he must be morally obliged by this Prospect of obtaining his own Happiness, to do good to others, the necessary and surest Means to be observed as leading to this general End, Page 68, 36; but all this is again contradicted, Page 48, 49. There the natural Conveniencies, and Inconveniencies — of these certain Means will not induce moral Obligation; — there can be no Morality in complying with any Rule but the Will of God; though a Patient may be convinced of the Fitness of the Rules prescribed him to preserve his Health, and is obliged to comply with them, on a Principle of Self-Interest, — yet such a Compliance is not Moral, — but only such a one as is founded on the summum bonum, — the Interests of another Life, and compared with the Rule founded upon that.*

^o Essay, p. 4. 33.
p. 36, 68.

^r Essay, &c. p. 40.

² Essay,

And this opens another direct Contradiction to us in the Places before-cited. He often testifies, both for himself, and the Author of the *Supplement*, that they mean, not a Prospect of private Temporal Happiness, but of future, and eternal, that a Man is to act upon; which is his *ultimate End*, and which induces moral Obligation. — And yet if it should be objected to him, that *disinterested Benevolence*, which he had before commended, Page 67, is *inconsistent with what was said before of private Happiness being a Man's ultimate End*; he answers, Page 68, That it is not in the least inconsistent with it, but a necessary Means to it, a necessary Means of procuring the *Esteem of Mankind*, and the Benefits of it, which must therefore be the *ultimate End* here meant, or there is no Meaning in the Place.

And to talk of a natural *Rule of Morality founded on the Prospect of a future Reward* is (setting aside Revelation) plainly absurd; since we must find out what Law we are to observe from other Principles, before we can expect a Reward for it. The Prospect of a Reward is not naturally antecedent, but subsequent to the Discovery of the Law. And accordingly he proves himself, that Justice, &c. is the Will of God, and thereby our Duty, *because in the present System of Things it is necessary to the Well-being and Happiness God designed Men for*; but if God designed us for future Happiness, and our Rule of Morality is to be founded on that Prospect, God might certainly very consistently command us any Method of acting without regard to the present System of Things, and reward us with future

^c Essay, p. 19.

^c Essay, p. 21, 16, 53.

Happiness for observing it. Nothing can make this inconsistent with God's Design, but supposing that he designed our present Happiness, as well as future, and that our Rule of Behaviour is to be founded on a Prospect of that Temporal Happiness and Well-being, that he designed us ; for observing which he will make us happy hereafter. To find out therefore this Rule of Morality founded on God's Design, we must know what Happiness he designed us here. God's Design is to be learnt from his Works, his very Goodness is to be proved *à posteriori*, and no other way :
 — He has implanted in Man *no other Principle naturally but Self-Love, and a Desire of his own Happiness* ^u ; — *malevolent Affections may be proved to be as natural as benevolent ones* ^w, — *no single Reason can be given (setting aside the Consideration of a Reward) why one ought to suffer the least Evil, to remove from another the greatest* ^x ; *why a Man should communicate Happiness to another rather than Misery* ^y — therefore God has given Men no natural Principle, to hinder them from following this Self-love in all Cases, or to shew them it was his Design that they should promote the Happiness of others, any further than they find their own Account in it ; Selfishness therefore after all with regard to this World is the only Principle of Morality, this Writer has left us.

If it be said that, though there is nothing in our selves, nothing in others, (whom neither Reason, or Affection, but only Self-Interest disposes us to love and assist ^z) that leads us to do good

^t Essay, p. 16, 52.

^u Essay, p. 35.

^w Essay.

^{*} p. 33.
65.

^x Essay, p. 66, 61.

^z Essay, p. 60, 61.

^y Essay, p. 64.

Offices to one another ; yet there is something in God, from whence we may conclude it to be his Will, and Command ; *as he has an intrinsick Desire to do Good, as he could have no other End in Creation, but to communicate Happiness^a*, he must Will the present Happiness of all his Creatures, and consequently that we should act in such a manner, as to promote it as far as we can. I reply, this Argument proves that we ought to do good Offices to Brutes equally as to Men — they are God's Creatures as well as Men — God had no Design in Creation but to communicate Happiness — therefore we ought to promote their Happiness as far as possible. Or if we may treat them in such a manner, as is most for our Temporal Interest, notwithstanding God's Design in Creation ; then we may treat Men upon the same Footing for the same Reason ; unless from the very Nature of Men, from the Condition, and Relation they stand in to us, it appears fit, and reasonable in itself, (and thereby the Will of God particularly as to them) that we should treat them in a kind, benevolent Manner. Therefore this Writer's Morality that sets aside the Consideration of these natural Finesses, and Relations, leaves us no other Principle of Morality but Selfishness, a Prospect of private Happiness with regard to this World, and not with regard to another, as he so often professes both for himself, and the Author of the Supplement^b.

And indeed how is it possible they should mean a future, and eternal Happiness, that a Man is

^a Essay. p. 36, 40, 68.

^b Essay, p 64, 65.

to act in view of, and found all his Morality upon, when according to the Supplement, *the Hopes of a future Reward were neither certain enough to be depended upon, nor clear enough to be of any great Use to the wisest of the Heathen World?* How could they act with a view to their own eternal Happiness in this unknown State? What Rule of Morality could be founded on that, which, in his Account, had itself no Foundation? If therefore, *setting aside the Consideration of a future Reward, no Reason can be given why one should suffer the least Degree of Pain, to remove from another the greatest*², — and communicating Happiness is not better to the Agent than communicating Misery, the Heathens, who had no hopes of a future State sure enough to act upon, had no Reason to do good to others but for Temporal Ends; and therefore private Temporal Interest was the only Principle on which they could found their Morality, and by which they could naturally discover the several Duties of it.

And thus his Morality, as was justly charged upon the Author of the Supplement, is *no better than the Morality of a Pick-Pocket or Highway-Man*³, (in which *the Worthies of the Hebrews* are not concerned, who through Faith and Patience inherited the Promises) and he *that is most selfish in Regard to this World, is most virtuous according to this Account, and will be most acceptable to God*⁴.

The better to finish this Argument without Interruption, I have passed over other Contradictions, that occurred to me in the Course of it, which I shall now consider. He determines very

² Essay p 66.
67.

³ Essay p. 69.

⁴ Essay, p. 66.

anguinely with the World on his Side that God is not a proper Subject of Obligation ^k, though he had before shewn that he was capable of it in the same Manner as Man is. — But yet it is strange Affectation in some late Writers to affirm with Dr. Cudworth, that it has always been the Sense of the Generality of Mankind, that there being an essential Difference of Good and Evil, there must be an impartial Justice in the Deity that presideth over the same ^l. — There is, he says, no such Difference, there is no such Thing as absolute Fitness ^m, but relative only; — He proves it thus — absolute Fitness can never give a moral Character, because there is no Action, but what may be fit in some Respect or other; Hypocrisy is as fit for the End of a Knave as Honesty for the End of an honest Man. Therefore (the Consequence sure should have been,) relative Fitness of Means to Ends that can make Hypocrisy and Honesty thus fit for different Ends, cannot give a moral Character; but it must be either the absolute Fitness of a certain End it self, or of the Means used, which would certainly make one of the Contraries unfit, that can only make a Thing moral: which was to be disproved.

Compare only what he says in another Place, and relative Fitness shall make contrary Actions equally fit for the same End. Hypocrisy, says he, is as fit for the End of a Knave, as Honesty for the End of an honest Man. What is the End then a Knave proposes? Self-Happiness no doubt this is what he must choose, and cannot act against but by Mistake ⁿ. A Knave is he that does Wrong upon a Principle of Interest ^o. If then Hypocrisy

^k P. 8.

^m P. 9.

^l Cudworth's Intell. System, p. 890.

ⁿ P. 3, 51, 33.

^o P. 67. Note.

is equally fit to promote this End as Honesty, it is equally moral, and obligatory; and so by relative Fitness, Contradictions are stamped with a moral Character.

Again, there cannot, he says, be any absolute *Fitnesses* ab æterno, because there were no Things ab æterno^p; in the same Manner as the *Atheist* proves there could be no Knowledge of God from Eternity, because the World, and all Things must be before there could be any Knowledge of them^q — and yet God foreknew what Relations, Effects, and Consequences would result from such Natures formed in his own Mind. — There was a Knowledge of a most perfect Being comprehending himself from all Eternity, and the Extent of his own Power, that is, all the Possibilities of Things, their Ideas with their several Relations, all necessary and immutable Truths^r.

And yet, it seems, these Truths are neither necessary nor immutable; they arise from the Constitution of Things, and therefore from the Will of the Constitutor, and we are obliged to observe them for the same Reason, as we are to observe the Laws of Matter and Motion, because God has given certain Things certain Powers to do us Good or Harm. Bating him then the Absurdity of supposing moral Agents to be Pieces of Mechanism, that are to observe the Laws of Matter and Motion; which natural Bodies, not moral Agents are to be guided by, and which it was not Criminal in our Saviour to violate in order to perform useful Miracles; he means, I suppose, that as natural Bodies governed by the Laws of Matter, and Motion, become Instruments of

^p Essay, p. 10, 11.
p. 730.

^r Essay, p. 20.
Intell. System, p. 678, 718, 733.

^q Cudworth's Intell. System.
^s Cudworth's

Good or Harm* to our selves or others, the moral Law that forbids Injury of all Sorts, hinders us from doing those Things to one another, that are hereby hurtful; this he improperly calls *observing the Laws of Matter and Motion*, when it is really observing the moral Law only extended to these constituted Natures acted by these Laws. Thus then his Argument stands; *it is immoral to give a Man a Potion of Poison because God would, there should be that Relation between his Body and the Liquor, which we find there is; and so it is immoral to deprive a Man of his Right, because God was pleased to give Man such a Nature, that Justice would be necessary to his Happiness; so that both Obligations flow in the same Manner from the Will of God†, and his Constitution of Men and Things in such a Manner". If he had created Beings of a different Kind, different Laws of Action would have prevailed. — And yet the wise Author of Nature cannot create Beings, that should be perpetually clashing with, and opposing themselves, and one another". He cannot sure create such an original Hell, that rational Beings in whatever State they are placed, should be at Liberty to invade one another's Rights, disturb one another's Peace, or abuse their own natural Powers, and hurt themselves, whatever are the Acts and Instruments of Intemperance and Debauchety. Some Acts there are that will hurt a rational Nature under all Constitutions of Things, as, *as-senting to contradictory Propositions. — Acting contrary to Conscience*, which himself says, *every one grants we shall be uneasy and self-condemned for* x. Though perpetual Contradiction! p. 28. there is*

* Essay, p. 22, 23.

† P. 11, 12, 13.

‡ P. 31.

x P. 44.

he says *no such Conscientious Uneasiness, but what arises from the Apprehension of Punishment*; let him consult the Places referred to, if he is willing to be convinced in this Particular^y.

But besides this natural Means of hurting our selves in all Constitutions, there may be many other Things that may be hurtful to us, or others by Constitution only, as Poison to the Body; but the Obligation not to administer them, does not therefore arise from the Constitution; if it did, it would be immoral, as he says, to give a Man Poison at all, because it has been made hurtful to him. It is Poison by Constitution therefore not to be given. But *the material Part of all Actions* notwithstanding their Constitution to do Good or Evil to the Subject of them, *is indifferent and the Formality of them must be learnt from the Circumstances*; to kill a Man, to hurt his Body with a Sword is *neither Good or Bad in it self*, notwithstanding the Constitution of the Action to hurt him, *but it may be one or the other according to the Circumstances the Agent and Patient are in*^z. Therefore it is not the Constitutions of Things to do Good or Harm, but some other Rule previous to the Constitution that regulates the use of them, not according to their Effects, but according to the Circumstances of Things. And to make the Obligation, to use, or not use Things, arise from the Constitution of them, and the Will of the Constitutor would be to make the moral Law that regulates the use of

^y Cumberland, p. 262. Sui veneni partem magnam Scelus Exhibet p. 276. S. 41, 281, 209, 210, 234, 94. Conscia mens est actuum suorum, &c Exinde affert sibi vel Tranquillitatem — vel Tristitiam — in hac mentis vi tota Conscientia vis Consistit qua leges sibi proponit.

^z Essay, p. 54.

Words, (Things of humane Appointment, and Constitution) and all other Laws that are suited to Men *in the different Circumstances they bring themselves into*^a, owe their Obligation to the Will of Man. There is no Way of avoiding this Absurdity, but by allowing an eternal immutable Rule of Morality, that does not arise from any particular Constitution, but from the Reasons and Fittesses of Things in all Circumstances, and therefore extends to, and comprehends every possible State of Things, and *can only end with Reason itself*^b, that discovers the Fittess of it.

By this it is that God is obliged; by this determined to suit his Laws to the Conditions of Things; since *there is a Reasonableness of a Law with Regard to the Imposer, as well as the Subject of it*^c. And therefore a wise Law-giver cannot Command a Thing that is *foolish in it self*^d: by this he was determined to communicate Happiness; and to communicate it in such a Degree as he has done. Monstrous are the Contradictions he falls into, when he labours to deny it. Communicating Happiness he says was *voluntary in him*, p. 51—*Will is a blind Principle, and wants something to direct it*, p. 3.—And yet *all must be resolved into his Will only*, p. 14—And yet *not into Will as a blind Principle acted by Chance and Caprice* (that is into Will only) but acted by *infinite Wisdom and Goodness, to do Good* (which is I think his own Absurdity of *proving God to be good from his Goodness*^e) — Nevertheless to say he is *acted by Goodness is no more, than assigning his bare Will and Inclination for a Cause of his Actions*^f. So that after all

^a Essay, p. 57.

^d P. 56.

^b P. 73, 74.

^e P. 16.

^c Essay, p. 59, 57.

^f P. 15.

this talk about Wisdom, because it would suppose something *better* in it self, which it therefore prefers^g, it is all at last but *bare blind Will still* without any Direction from Wisdom. To suppose Man's Will to be determined any certain Way in this Manner is, he says himself, plainly absurd; and therefore he asks what can determine it to do good: and why is it not the same Absurdity to suppose Will in God to be thus determined by Nothing? why may we not ask in his own Words what can induce God to *communicate Happiness rather than Misery*; what is the *exciting Reason*? You must either assign one, or tell me it is *preferable in it self*, and then the *Pleasure of doing it will be the true Reason*; now this is recurring to a moral Sense^h — Which supposes a pre-established Notion of what is morally Good or Evil — An Action is not morally Good, because approved, nor morally Evil, because disapproved; but it is therefore approved because apprehended to be morally Good, or disapproved, because morally Evilⁱ — But if Communicating Happiness or Misery is a Thing indifferent to the Agent, as he says, p. 64; Then God prefers communicating Happiness, but no Body knows why^k; A gross Absurdity he owns in Relation to Man's Will, and why not in Relation to God? And yet it is and must be so, p. 15. there's no Reason to be assigned for this Determination of the Divine Will. And to give us a Specimen of this Determination of Will without Reason or contrary to it; he will not see, or acknowledge his own Consequence, p. 55, 56, 20. That God's willing a Thing (willing

^g Cumberland, p. 226. nec prudentia potest esse ulla —
si alius Finis non est alio major.

ⁱ Essay, p. 43.

^k Essay, p. 66.

^h Essay. P. 65.

to communicate Happiness for Instance) *shews it to be fitting simply or in the whole.* Neither indeed will he there adhere to it, but contradicts himself in one Breath, and therefore adds, that *God's willing a Thing rather makes it fit, than shews it to be so* — Though p. 54, he had said — *Things were absolutely fit, or unfit in Relation to the Circumstances* —; and p. 5, *one Religion may be fit at one Time, and another at another, according as the Subjects of it are under different Circumstances.* — But after all so it must be, — *God has an intrinsic Desire to communicate Happiness* — though it is indifferent to the Agent, — and though *he wants nothing to excite that Desire*¹ — It is as necessary as his Existence is^m — The same intrinsic Desire led him to make just such kind of Beings as he has madeⁿ — He was not determined by any Thing, but *proposed to act for a certain End, the Communication of Happiness* — But how came he to propose that Happiness, that Degree of Happiness which he afterwards speaks of as intended by God? What limited necessary infinite Goodness from having its full necessary Effect, and measured it out in such Proportions? What induced him to create such kind of Creatures? What? But as he immediately adds, *his foreknowing what Relations would result from such Natures formed in his own Mind* — *that the whole Scheme might be the best, that was possible. The best that was possible?* On what Account? What? Because he would command them a certain Method of acting in Relation to one another, was this Scheme the best possible in Relation to the Law he would arbitrarily prescribe it? This could not determine his Will to create it in this Manner; since by

¹ Essay, p. 19.^m p. 51, 15.ⁿ p. 20.

designing it another Law, which (if there's no eternal Law in it self he might do) he might make another Scheme of Things equally best, and so it would be *accident or caprice* that his Will was determined to choose one rather than another. Best therefore it must be, upon Account of that Law that would necessarily regulate the Actions of all rational Agents, and thereby extend to the Relations these Beings should be in to one another, and direct their Behaviour so as would best suit the Design God saw fit to propose, and promote that Degree of Happiness he was by his Wisdom determined to communicate. The Contemplation of these Relations, and the Law that would extend to, or result from them, induced him to create us in the Manner he did; — And yet perpetual Contrariety. *The Appearances of the Relations of Things are said, p. 14. to be Things ab extra to him, from which he is perfectly free, so as not to be determined by them to Action at all, or to any Manner of Action:* And therefore not to create his Creatures at first, nor treat them afterwards, in a certain Manner, according to their Merit and Demerit, (Relations I think, as much *ab extra* to him as any can be) and so God is said to be wise and just, and good once for Decency Sake^o: But we hear no more of his Justice, now and then a Word of his Wisdom that has no Objects to be exercised about^p, nor any Effect to determine his Actions, but all is necessary Goodness throughout the whole Book.

^o Essay, p. 9.

His sublati nomen tantum sapientiæ & Deitatis relinquitur, res tollitur.

^p Cumberland, p. 226.

To Crown these flagrant Contradictions in point of Reasoning, he afterwards gives us one in direct Matter of Fact. — *All the best Moralists*, he says, *are on his Side against the abstract Finesses of Things being in themselves obligatory*, Grotius and Dr. Clarke only are on the other Side ^a that maintains these Finesses. — And yet, p. 63, he tells us *there is scarce another Sect of Philosophers, except the Epicurean, but what are Favourers of this Opinion, that something is honestum, and decorum, and thereby obligatory in itself. The Epicureans were wiser than to hold this Doctrine; though Bishop Cumberland unhappily guesses with the Author of the Defence, that the Epicureans maintained as well as the Rest, that Virtue was desirable on Account of its intrinsick Perfection, though no Law commanded it, — and that therefore Pleasure was inseparable from it, because it was acting agreeably to Nature, and Reason* ^r: Which is I think saying, that it is not therefore *reasonable*, because *pleasant*, but therefore *pleasant*, because *reasonable*, and to be desired for the Sake of the Pleasure that attends it. Thus do his wise Epicureans, the best Moralists among the Ancients, as he calls them, clearly maintain the absurd Doctrine he expressly condemns, Page 66; and therefore all the best Moralists but Grotius, and Dr. Clarke, are by his own contradictory Confession not on his Side.

And another good Moralist, whom he quotes on his Side, often says, expressly against him, ^r *that the Mind approves or condemns itself, for having done well, or ill, purely by its own Reflection upon its past Actions, in which the Force of Consci-*

^a Essay, p. 46. Note.
282, 277, 280.

^r Cumberland, p. 281;
^r Essay, p. 28,

ence consists ¹, whereby it makes Laws to itself. This Conscience is not any *distinct Power or Sense of the Mind*, as Eyes, or Ears are of the Body, as he weakly imagines, p. 29. and vainly labours to confute, Chap. v. but it is the Effect of the Understanding and Will united, as Bishop Cumberland well expresses it ²; what the Understanding judges right, the Will must comply with, or it will produce Remorse, Contradiction, and Uneasiness in the Mind, which is the strongest Obligation, says Cumberland ³.

To avoid this he would insinuate, page 44, that we have no sure way of being directed to what is right, either by Reason or Disposition; but all our Approbations and benevolent Affections proceed from I know not what accidental Associations. What! is there no such Thing as right Reason? How then can we *find out the Will of God by it*, page 5? Does a human Soul serve only the same Purpose as the Life of a Tree, to keep the Body blooming and fair, and in the mean time leave us to be warped, and bent any way indifferently, according to the Impressions we receive? Is there nothing that Reason will assure us to be right, that we can safely rest in, and must act upon? Why, *it is a Moral Law, or Maxim*, page 73, *that what God commands we are bound to obey*; but why is it so, but because Reason of itself convinces us, either that God has a right to command us, or that he is wiser, and more able to do us good than we are our selves, and by this Conviction, and inward Satisfaction of this speculative Truth, de-

¹ Cumberland, p. 43, 94. Prolegom. S. iv.
berland, p. 81, 82.

² P. 276.

³ Cum-

termines us to act in Obedience to his Commands. So that all Obligation begins from this inward rational Conviction, which we shall be Self-condemned if we do not follow; and must arise after all from the Perception of the Agreement, or Disagreement of our Ideas, as the Author of the Defence well observes, and is what *a Man of Sense* must at last have recourse to, even in making God's Will itself obligatory^x. And may not Reason convince us as well of other Truths, and thereby induce us to act agreeably to them, enforce those *natural benevolent Dispositions* we have, (which this Writer and *Hobbes* deny us^y) and make us, *if we consider Mankind as we ought, disposed to do no Injustice but good to others*^z? May it not convince us that we ought to treat others as we would be treated our selves, — that like things are like things, and not to be treated as unlike? This sure is as true as that God is God, is wise and good, and will equally gain our Assent, and make us condemn our selves if we act contrary to it. Away then with that fond Imagination of I know not what Associations, the Causes, as he says, of disinterested Benevolence, which are only to Account for *unreasonable and whimsical Affections*^a, and not those that are rational, and well-grounded; — which would make the Dispositions acquired by them *neither good, nor moral*^b; — which

* Essay, p. 25. † Hobbes de Cive. l. i. A. 2.
Essay, p. 35, 36, 40, 41. Cumberland, p. 72, 115. Plurarch's Consol. ad Uxor. p. 608. Antoninus, L. x. S. 9.
Aristot. ad Nicom. L. 8. c. 1. Cudworth's Intell. System,
p. 890. ‡ Essay, p. 68. Cumberland, p. 208.
Tully de leg. p. 41. § Essay, p. 38. ¶ Essay,
p. 43.

can never Account for the many Instances we have of disinterested Benevolence, since even in the Stoicks *who made this Association as strong as any Set of Philosophers*, Nature was often too strong for their Philosophy^c — which can never solve that particular Disposition of Humanity, which Men have to one another; since the covetous Man by his Association loves *Paper* as well as *Money*, if it is of equal value — can never Account for the various *Modes, and Degrees of Affection* to one more than another, but only to Mankind in general, as the covetous Man loves all *Money* alike. — And which lastly could not be the way, by which *Tully and others*, who speak so highly in Favour of disinterested Benevolence, acquired their Approbation of it; since, as he owns, page 40, *an Esteem of Benevolence got by this habitual Association*, would make *Men do good to others without Reference to themselves*; — but *Tully* and other Authors allow us in equal Circumstances *to do good to our selves preferably to others*^d, a Demonstration this that they did not acquire their Benevolence to others by such an Association as would have carried them beyond any regard to themselves; but that Reason^e only, not any hectical Disorder of Mind, was the Rule, and Measure of their Regard both to themselves, and others. And since these benevolent Affections are to be acquired by Reason, they are, says *Cumberland*, natural to Men^f, in spite of all the Examples of Malevolence that have appeared in the World;

^c Sherlock on Providence, p 250.

^d Tully de Off.

L. 3. c. 5. Puffendorf. B. 2. ch. 3. S. 15.

^e Tully de Off. L. 1. c. 4.

^f Cumberland, p. 218.

whom

whom this Writer would make Patterns, and Standards of human Nature: — when himself owns *they did not consider Mankind as they ought^h*, — and they are in the Apostle's Description — *without Understanding, without natural Affection, and therefore implacable and unmercifulⁱ*.

But to come to his grand Determination of the Value of Moral and Positive Duties, and to allow him that *the Obligation of both arises only from the Will of God*, though his own Arguments have so fully proved the contrary; let the Question be as he states it, p. 72: *Whether sincere Obedience to God in positive Instances is not as valuable, as sincere Obedience to God in moral Instances*; and therefore whether positive, or moral Duties are to be preferred, when they stand in Competition, To find out this, *Reason*, as he says^k, *must be called in to shew which is the Will of God in any Case*. And Reason must judge, in Cases where there is no particular Direction, which is the Will of God (not from the Penalties annexed to the Breach of each Law, since the Penalties cannot take Place but in Circumstances, where each is to be observed, and therefore cannot determine those Circumstances, but) by considering, as he well adds, *What Importance each Law is of, what Stress is laid upon it, what is the general End, and Design of it*. If then the Matter of moral Duties is preferable to the Matter of positive^l, *If moral Actions are so necessary Means of Happiness in the present State of Things, that if God was not to command them, he would frustrate his own Design^m*, —

^g Essay, p. 31, 32.

ⁱ Rom. i. 28, 31.

^m Essay, p. 20, 21, 73.

^h Essay, p. 68, 36, 34.

^k Essay, p. 74.

^l Essay, p. 72.

If the use of Prayer and other positive Duties is only to keep up in Mens Minds, a Sense of God and his Providenceⁿ. — If a Man may, and ought to practise moral Duties with the same good Dispositions, as he plainly supposes, p. 82. and expressly says, p. 6. then the Importance, the End and Design of moral Duties, is greater than the End and Design of positive; the Sum of Value on the moral Side is greater than the Sum of Value on the positive. And we have by moral Arithmetick the same Reason to conclude that God, who lays the greatest Stress, where there are the greatest Reasons, who foreknows all the Effects of Things, and must will them as he has made them^o, commands us to prefer moral to all other Duties, as that he commands us to practise moral at all. And therefore that when we bring our Gift to the Altar, we ought first to be reconciled to our Brethren, before we offer our Gift.

Accordingly, if we Turn to our Bibles, as he directs, we shall find not one Instance of Persons punished for neglecting moral to do positive Duties; and if we turn to the History of the Church, we shall find Examples of primitive Christians that deferred Baptism to the Time of their Death, *However indispensably necessary it is, p. 75. or ordinarily necessary, p. 76. to Salvation, so that no Pretences of doing Good can be a sufficient Excuse for neglecting it.*

So sensible is he of the Justness of this Conclusion from his own Principles, *that God's Will is to be learnt from the Reasons, and End of a Law, that in page 82 — Actions that are most serviceable to Mankind are not most pleasing to God*

ⁿ Essay, p. 76, 82.

^o Essay, p. 20.

on that Account, and to prove it, he supposes the material part of moral Duty only to be done from bad Principles, which is not therefore so pleasing to God as Positive Duties done from good ones. When in stating the Question himself, he supposed in both sincere Obedience to the Will of God, and then enquired which was the most valuable ^{p.}

The gross Calumny he would fix upon his Adversaries, p. 70, 71. as if their Principles favoured Infidelity, and would make Christianity unfit, and improper, at present, because it was not always fit, and the absolute Fitness of Things is, he thinks, not to be altered by any Change of Circumstances; himself has confuted by another Contradiction, p. 54. — *The Circumstances of Things changing, change the very Nature of the Action from Good to Evil, or vice versa*; as all his Adversaries have often said in the Case of *Abraham* particularly; and which is indeed the fundamental Principle of all their Morality.

In the same Manner would he have confuted the Charge he has brought against one of his Adversaries, of misrepresenting *Bingham's* Meaning, had he not carefully suppressed part of his Sense. To prove that *Bingham* says, as his Principal had represented him, that the *Antients* looked upon the *Eucharist*, as a real Conveyance of Pardon from God, and not, according to Comparative Excellence, as a Form of Church Absolution only: He quotes him thus — *The Stewards of Christ's Mysteries were always supposed to have the ministerial Power of conveying Remission of Sins to Men by the Administration of*

Baptism — but we hear nothing of what follows — and so far as they were entrusted with the Administration of it, so far had they Power to bind, and to loose, to admit the Worthy into the Church, and keep the Unworthy out of it, that is, in a ministerial Way to remit Men's Sins. Again, as to the Eucharist he says — This had some relation to penitential Discipline, but did not solely belong to it, for it was given to all baptized Persons, who never fell under penitential Discipline; as well as to those who lapsed, and were restored to Communion again, and in both respects it was called the *τὸ τέλειον* the Perfection or Consummation of a Christian. — So far our Author is willing Bingham should be heard, and then comes — who can say? — But before any body can say any thing safely of the Case, he must hear what Bingham has to say further — To those who never fell under such Sins, adds he, as required a publick Penance, it was an Absolution for lesser Sins, which were called venial, or Sins of daily Incursion; and to Penitents who lapsed, it was an Absolution of the greater Sins for which they had fallen under Censure^a; and this Absolution by the Eucharist was given to the Penitent to restore him to the Communion of the Altar, to declare that he was in the Communion of the Church, and in favour with God, as far as human Understanding could judge^r — and if any one had not the Eucharist as a declaratory Sign of perfect Absolution before Death, Oblations were allowed to be made for him afterwards to declare it. — And now let the Reader say on which Side, a Comment to understand Bingham, or Honesty to represent him

^a Bingham. Vol. 2. p. B. 19. ch. 1. S. 2, 3. p. 238, 240.

^r Ibid. p. 251. S. 4, 6.

^f Ibid. p. B. 2. ch. 19. S. 11.

truly is wanting. Who can say that the Author of the *Supplement* has not shewn his Judgment in despising the Charge of Misrepresentation in this, and the other few Authorities he has produced; and employing another (that can face any Thing out for him, can affirm, in direct Contradiction to his own Words, that he never said, *that moral Duties are rather to be considered as Means to an End*;) to justify or disguise one of them as he has done, rather than be put to the Trouble of repeating or retracting the Blunder himself.

From the Confession then which I have thus extorted from the Adversary both of the Justness of the Arguments, and the Truth of the Charges brought against him, which he cannot contradict, without contradicting himself in many notorious Instances; I conclude that there is an *immutable Fitness and Relation in Things* independent on, and previous to the Will of God about them, which arises from the necessary Agreement of the Terms in a Proposition, and the Ideas they express; on which all Morality must be founded, and from which all Obligation must arise: Which is not therefore fit, because necessary to promote publick Good, no more than it is fit that twice two should be equal to four, because it is necessary to make out an Account, or Demonstration; but it therefore promotes common Good, because it is fit in itself; therefore the Equality of twice two to four makes out a Demonstration; because it is in itself necessary. He that would further know what this Fitness is, let him consult the uncorrupted Dictates of his

own Mind, when such Propositions are proposed to him; he that would have it explained in Words, let him first explain what is *Truth*; the first Principles of both are apparent in themselves; — and if any one will oppose or contradict such self-evident Truths, it will not be easy to find Arguments sufficient to convince him; and yet this notwithstanding ought not to be imputed to any Inability in the Teacher, nor to any Strength of Wit in the Denyer, but only to a certain dead Insensibility and *avandia* in him ^u.

Arrian. Epietet. l. 3. c. 5.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Preface, Page v. Line 13, and 21. for ? read ; p. 116
l. 1. r. says ; p. 13. Note, for Ellog. r. Eclog. for viftus, r.
virtus, p. 15. l. 19. for ratiocinari, r. fermocinari, p. 36. l. 18.
dele nor. l. 19. for no r. on. p. 42. l. 1. for not r. act. p. 57.
l. 25. for certanty r. certainty. p. 58. n. for nonne r. non.